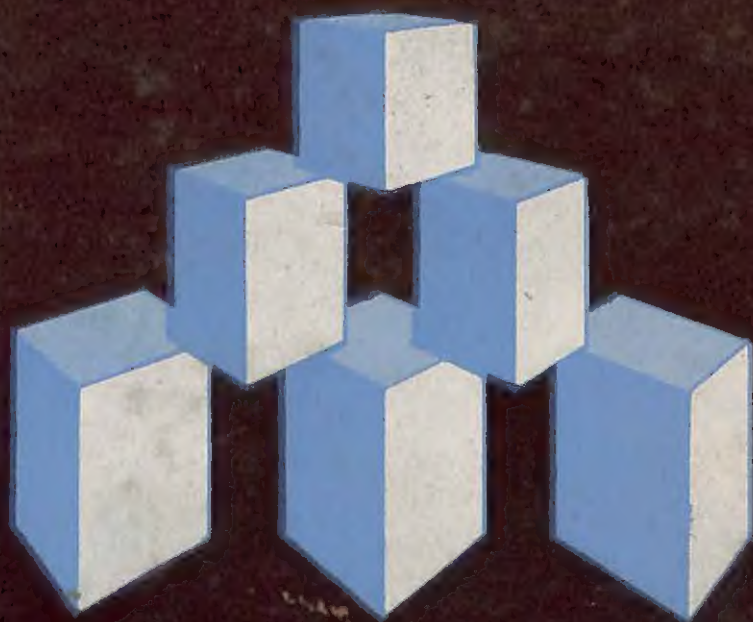


INNOVATIONS IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA

EDITOR

JACOB AIKARA



Innovations in education are consciously and purposely directed attempts to improve the existing system of education. They are in a way expressions of felt needs for change. Educational system is so much interrelated to the larger society that changes in the latter call for changes in the former. In a fast changing society educational innovation is inevitable. Ever since the independence India has been relying very much on education for the socio-economic and political development of the country. During the period after the independence various attempts in the form of innovations have been made to enable the *educational system to perform its* function in the changing Indian society. These innovations have been introduced either to make educational system function more efficiently or to meet new demands.

This book discusses the characteristic features and functions of innovation in education and presents some of the important innovations introduced in higher education in India. It analyses the historical antecedents of these innovations and critically evaluates their results. This is a valuable book not only to the students and teachers of education, but also to those who frame policies on innovations in education and plan and implement programmes of educational innovations.

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Edited by
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Jacob Aikara

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Preface

Education today has become a complex system. On account of the changes taking place in the larger society, it is constantly called upon to perform new and different functions. Such demands are much more exacting in the case of a developing society like India than anywhere else. Ever since the independence, three and a half decades ago, there have been rapid changes in India, some of which have affected the educational system too. In keeping pace with the changes, the educational system has tried to adapt itself to the new situations and to take care of the newly emerging needs. This is visible in the various innovative efforts within the educational system.

This book is an attempt to present a few important innovations introduced in higher education in India after the independence. There have been numerous innovative attempts in the educational system in India, initiated both by the government or the University Grants Commission and by the individual educational institutions. This volume was not meant to list all or most of them. Instead, it selected a few important innovations in higher education in India, that would serve as illustrations of the structural features and functions of innovation in higher education. There are, however, other innovations in higher education in India, which are illustrative of the structure and function of innovation as well. But, within the constraints involved in bringing out such a volume some arbitrary decisions had to be taken on the kind and number of innovations. Finally, five innovations were selected for inclusion in the volume.

The first chapter of the book deals with the structure and function of innovation in education and introduces the five innovations within the theoretical framework of the structure and function of innovation. The five innovations, constituting the subsequent five chapters of the book are Correspondence Education, National Service Scheme, Internal Assessment, Vocationalization at the +2 Stage, and Autonomous Colleges.

It may be mentioned that, on account of certain unforeseen problems, the book had an unduly long period of gestation. The idea of bringing out a volume of this type was conceived as early

as in 1979. And the contributions were written within an year. As a result, the factual data presented in the book correspond to the period prior to 1980.

As the book deals with the various aspects of innovation in education with illustrations, it is hoped that it will be fruitfully utilized by the students and teachers of education as well as by those who frame policies on innovations, and plan and implement programmes of innovation. Social scientists engaged in research in education will hopefully find it as a welcome addition to the literature on education.

— Jacob Aikara

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1

Introduction

Jacob Aikara

Education is an important social institution. As a social institution it has a structure and performs certain vital functions within the society. Education, viewed as an institution, is a system by itself existing and functioning within the larger social system. As a system within the larger social system the institution of education consists of a complex network of inter-relationships among individuals on the one hand, and forms a sub-system in constant interaction with the other sub-systems in the society, on the other. The function of a system depends on the network of interactions within it and the network of interactions within a system is, in turn, determined by its structure. The structural features are so designed that they give rise to a particular interaction network, which in turn brings about the desired functional output. The structural features are instituted in time and place to perform functions conceived of in time and place.

When a structural feature in course of time becomes incapable of performing the stipulated function, or where new functions arise demanding appropriate structures, new structures are introduced. Institution of such new structures for replacing the existing ones or for performing newly accepted functions is innovation. It is the introduction of something new, a new element — a new practice, procedure, norm, system — which is designed to perform a particular function. Its function is manifest or intended. In some cases both the structure and the function involved in an innovation are new and in others only the structure is innovative. Based on the manifest function of the innovative structure, innovations may be classified into three categories: (i) Some innovations are intended to perform new functions, i. e. a new structure is instituted for performing a new accepted function. (ii) Innovations, of which the innovative structure is intended to perform both new and already existing functions, form the second category. Innovations of this type are either alternatives or supplementary structures to perform existing

functions on the one hand, and at the same time are intended to have fresh functions, on the other. (iii) The third category of innovations are those new structures that are instituted for performing already existing functions. Such innovative structures are introduced for the better performance of already existing functions. The old structure is either replaced or the new structure becomes additional or supplementary in performing the same function, because the old structure has become obsolete or inefficient to perform the intended function. Thus the function of the innovative structure in this case is not really innovative.¹

The fact that innovations are structures designed to perform certain functions does not mean that they are free from dysfunctions. Innovations do at times have dysfunctions. Sometimes they do not perform the intended functions. That is how some innovations are short-lived. Often it happens that an innovation, when introduced or implemented, does not have the necessary structural features to perform the intended function. Such innovations malfunction within the system. Misconception of the structure and function of an innovation is possible, in the sense that a particular structure is not suitable or adequate to perform an intended function. It is also possible that at the implementation stage the innovative structure, as it has been conceived of, is not introduced so that the structure that has come into existence does not possess some of the features necessary to produce the intended results. It also happens that certain factors within or outside the system hinder the functioning of an innovation in the expected manner. In all these instances the innovative structure may not perform the intended function or may not perform it to the expected extent. In some cases the fault is with the designing of the innovative structure and in others the problem lies with implementation. As far as the design of an innovative structure is concerned, one has to see whether the innovation will fit in in the existing system as its partial structure and what other structural elements existing within and outside the system facilitate or hinder the functioning of the proposed innovation. As far as implementation is concerned it is important to note that faulty or, as very often happens, hasty implementation

1. It is possible that all the three categories of innovations may have latent functions that are existing or new. The above categorization of innovations is based only on the manifest functions of innovative structures.

results in the distortion of the structural features of the innovation and such a distorted or inadequate structure will not perform the intended function. Thus, proper designing and efficient implementation are two important aspects of any innovation. Absence of them may not only render an innovative structure incapable of performing the intended function but also reduce it to a structure producing dysfunctions.

Another problem or issue involved in introducing an innovation is that, being something new, an innovative structure is likely to face resistance. The tendency of any system is to maintain itself and introduction of any new structure is a disturbance within the system, even if the new structure is intended to perform an already existing function. Disturbance of the system is all the more when a new structure is introduced to perform a newly felt function. Such disturbance at times may give rise to opposition to the innovation and even sabotage of the new structure. What happens in the case of a new structure is that it makes more or different demands or at least adjustments and adaptations from the individuals in interaction within the system. The success of an innovation, therefore, depends also on the readiness and preparedness on the part of the interacting individuals who are affected by the new structure, or through whose interaction the new structure is maintained.

Study of an innovation, therefore, requires one to examine the specific function intended to be performed by the new structure, the context in which the function is recognized as desirable, the structural features of the innovation as introduced or implemented, the reactions of the concerned individuals to it, and its success or failure in performing the intended function.

Innovation in education is the institution of a new structure within the educational system for performing a specific educational function. The educational system does not exist or function in a vacuum. It is a sub-system within the larger social system which comprises various other sub-systems, such as economy and polity. There is continuous interaction between the educational system and the other sub-systems. A change in one sub-system call for a change or an adjustment in the other sub-systems. As far as the educational system is concerned, change in the other systems may mean two things. First, some of the functions the educational system has been expected to perform are not satisfactorily performed, i. e. the existing educational structures are

not adequate to perform the functions in the way the latter were conceived of. Second, new functions have emerged which call for new educational structures. In this situation the demands on the educational system are two : (i) replacement of the structures that have become obsolete to perform the intended functions. (or introduction of at least additional structures) and (ii) institution of structures for performing newly emerged functions. In both these cases what is involved is the institution of new structural elements. Educational innovation refers to such introduction of new structural elements for replacing obsolete elements, or for strengthening the existing ones, or for performing newly accepted functions. Since the structure–interaction–function network is instituted and operates in time and space, there is bound to be need for educational innovations. For, what is functional at one time and place may not be so at another, and what is not a need at one time and place may be felt as need at another. Innovations, thus, may be considered as mechanisms within the sub-system to adjust itself and adapt to new situations.

From the perspective of innovations as new structures within the educational system they may be viewed as “ inward looking ” and “ outward looking ”. Inward looking innovations are those whose manifest functions are primarily confined to the educational system itself. They generally aim at better performance of certain functions within the system and have little direct implication for the inter-relationship between the educational system and other sub-systems. They are mainly concerned with the maintenance of the educational system in itself. For example, new structural elements that have purely academic functions, such as better performance by teachers and students, belong to the category of inward looking innovations. Outward looking innovations are those structural elements introduced within the educational system, whose manifest functions directly relate the educational sub-system to other sub-systems of society. They are essentially educational structures, but have direct extra-educational references and implications. For example, new structural elements in the educational system, that are directly concerned with enabling individuals to participate meaningfully in the economic or political sub-system, are outward looking innovations. Although internal structures of the educational system, they are directly concerned with the maintenance of the inter-relationship between the educational system and other sub-systems within the society. The

distinction between inward looking innovations and outward looking innovations is analytical and there is no separation between the two. In so far as they are structural elements within the educational system, both the inward looking and the outward looking innovations belong to the internal structure of the educational system and perform educational functions contributing to the maintenance of the educational system in itself and its inter-relationship with other sub-systems. The difference between the two is that the outward looking innovations have direct extra-educational-system relevance, while the direct relevance of the inward looking innovations is within the educational system.

The present volume contains some innovations, introduced in the higher educational system in India after the independence. They have been dealt with in the above perspective, viz. as structural elements introduced within the educational system to perform certain functions. Obviously, not all the innovations in higher education have been selected for inclusion in this volume. The guideline in selecting innovations was to have not a volume containing an exhaustive list of innovations, but one which would include the various types of innovations (those which are inward and outward looking, those which perform new functions, those which perform already existing functions, and those performing both new and existing functions.) It was also seen to, that the volume would contain such innovations as would bring out the salient features of the various types of innovations (structure and function, problems and issues in introducing an innovative structure, factors affecting the success of an innovation, etc). The volume, thus, is not a comprehensive description, but an analytical presentation of innovations in higher education in India. Two of the innovations included in the volume (Correspondence Education and National Service Scheme) are new structures having new functions. Another two of them (Internal Assessment in Higher Education and Vocationalization at the +2 Stage) are innovative structures instituted to perform new and existing functions. The last one (Autonomy of College) belongs to the category of innovations that are introduced to perform basically existing functions. Of the above five innovations, two (National Service Scheme and Vocationalization at the + 2 Stage) are outward looking and the remaining three, inward looking.

Each of the innovations is dealt with generally under the following framework : the structural features of the innovation, its historical antecedents and factors contributing to its introduction, the function it is intended to perform, and its actual operation in terms of the intended function. All the contributors have written on the respective innovations under this general framework. Of course, there are individual variations regarding the extent to which this general framework has been adhered to. Such variations are natural when several individuals make contributions to a volume.

1. Correspondence education is an innovation that has been recently introduced in the system of higher education in India. The special characteristic of correspondence education as an innovation is that both its structure and function are new. It is an innovation designed to serve a newly felt need in higher education. Formerly, education, especially higher education, was confined to a few individuals. Today, there is increasing demand for higher education, at times even as an individual's right. The existing formal structure has been incapable of catering to the needs of all, either because of lack of resources on the part of the educational system or because the formal structure has not been conducive or convenient to some individuals to pursue higher education. Why should higher education be denied to those who are handicapped because of their household responsibilities or economic pursuits and physical remoteness from the formal educational institutions ? Correspondence education is a facility that is available to those who are handicapped in these ways

The direct function of correspondence education is to impart knowledge and skills to those who are not available for formal education. Correspondence education is therefore, an inward looking innovation. It is a part of the larger educational system and it performs a basically educational function within the educational system, viz. imparting knowledge and skills. What are the structural features of correspondence education ? How does it function in India ? The article on "Correspondence Education" answers these questions.

2. With the emergence of education as a formal system, began the alienation of the educational system from the society or community it served. There has been the tendency of separating the world of learning from the world of life. It is feared that

those passing through the formal system of education, especially at the higher levels, get alienated from the community. One of the ways in which higher education in India is seeking to tackle this problem is by implementing the National Service Scheme (NSS). The NSS tries to maintain a constant link between the educational system and the community. It attempts to involve students in the life and development of the community. It seeks to prevent the phenomenon of students getting alienated from the community on the one hand, and positively provides opportunities for them to serve the community and to be actively involved in the development and welfare of the community, on the other.

The NSS is an outward looking innovation within the educational system. That is, it tries to link those in the educational system with the world outside. By doing so, it strengthens interaction between the educational system and the social system outside. Regarding innovativeness both the structure and the function of this innovation are new. This innovation seems to have come to stay in higher education in India. The article on the "National Service Scheme" describes how this innovative structure functions to maintain a healthy link between the educational institution and the community.

3. Internal assessment as innovation is an inward looking structural feature in higher education. Its structure and function are basically confined to the educational system. In itself internal assessment may not be considered as an innovation, in so far as internal assessment is the earliest form of evaluation one could think of. It is an innovation in the context we are speaking of. It has been introduced as an alternative or an additional method of evaluation. It is designed to perform both the functions which external examination has been performing (measuring of the learning outcomes) and the function which was beyond the scope of the evaluation system of external examination (integration of evaluation with teaching and learning). This is the innovativeness involved in internal assessment. It is a structural feature concerned with the internal maintenance of the educational system, viz., the evaluation of the learning process, the supreme function within the educational system. As a structure doing the function performed by external examination, internal assessment has certain structural features in common with external examination. As a different form of evaluation with an additional

function, internal assessment has its own specific structural characteristics. The article on the "Internal Assessment" discusses this innovation in the context of external examination.

It must be noted that the structures of internal assessment and external examination are not mutually exclusive. They can coexist and perform together the function of evaluation. In this sense they are complimentary to each other. Total replacement of an existing structure is very often difficult. When the new structure has the same function to perform, the change-over is usually brought about in stages. That is, the new structure is introduced and the old one withdrawn gradually. In the case of evaluation in higher education in India this is happening now. Wherever internal assessment structure has been introduced as an innovation, it constitutes just a part of the evaluation structure.

4. Vocationalization at the +2 stage (or the higher secondary stage) is another recent innovation in higher education in India². Actually, vocationalization is not anything new. There have been various programmes in the past for vocationalizing education. What is innovative about vocationalization at the +2 stage is that : (i) it is a structural feature at the higher secondary school level, which has been recently introduced as an intermediary stage between school and university, and (ii) it is intended to serve certain specific functions within the educational system. Vocationalization in the simple sense means equipping the individual with the necessary knowledge and skills which enable him to be gainfully engaged in an occupation. At the +2 stage it is intended to function not only for equipping the individuals for employment but also as a mechanism to check uncontrolled rush for university education and thereby to improve university education.

Vocationalization at the +2 stage is the *sine qua non* of the recent restructuring of education into school, higher secondary and university. The success of this three-tier system depends on success of the vocationalization at the higher secondary school level. Thus, vocationalization here is a structural element that

2. It may be argued that the +2 stage technically does not belong to higher education. Since in many parts of India the +2 stage functions as a higher educational stage and vocationalization at the +2 stage has direct functional relevance to university education, in the present context it has been taken as an innovation in higher education.

has functions in the world of both learning and work. On the one hand, it relates education to the economic system by equipping individuals to function profitably in the larger society. On the other hand, it strengthens the internal structure of the educational system by imparting education that is relevant and useful to the individual and by taking in a selected few for university education. In so far as its function within the educational system flows from its direct function of equipping individuals for gainful employment, vocationalization at the +2 stage may be considered as an outward looking innovation. Equipping individuals for gainful employment is an age old function of vocationalization. The function of controlling enrolment in university education is a newly intended function of vocationalization. Thus, vocationalization at the +2 stage is an innovation that is designed to perform both new and the existing functions. Chapter V discusses vocationalization at the +2 stage as an educational innovation.

5. Autonomous colleges are a new and rare phenomenon in India today. But the concept of autonomy of college is not new. There have been constant demands for greater college autonomy and independence. Colleges do have some level of autonomy; otherwise it would not have been possible for them to exist as individual institutions. One could think of two kinds of autonomy: administrative and academic. When we speak of autonomy of college as an innovation we refer mainly to academic autonomy. The structural feature of autonomy of college as an innovation consists in the academic freedom and independence granted to the individual colleges. The objective of such increased freedom is academic excellence. It means that the institutions which are granted autonomy have the responsibility of utilizing it for the improvement of the academic standards. Only those institutions which are capable of shouldering this responsibility are to be given autonomy. As an innovation designed to improve academic standard, autonomy is a new structure with basically old function. Academic excellence is an age old function in all educational institutions. Autonomy concentrates on it as its specific function. Autonomy of college, thus, is concerned mainly with the maintenance of the internal structure of the educational system—academic excellence. In so far as it is a structure within the educational system and its manifest function is within the educational system, autonomy of college is an inward looking innovation.

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Autonomy implied here is not absolute, but relative. Colleges granted autonomy will be more free and independent than others to perform their academic functions. Ther are, of course, some minimum level of dependence and control, just as those colleges, which are not autonomous, have some level of independence to function as individual institutions. The article on "Autonomous Colleges" discusses autonomy as a new structural feature in higher education—the extent of autonomy, the actual use of autonomy, the problems involved in it, and the achievement of college through autonomy.

□ □ □

Correspondence Education

S. Bhatnager

Concept, Objectives and Rationale

The process of modernization that the newly-emerged nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America initiated immediately after achieving their political independence with a view to securing to their nationals the fruits of modern science and technology (which had been denied to them for long), brought in its wake wide-ranging changes of a highly profound and far reaching nature. Besides bringing about significant transformations in the democratic, socio-economic and political structures of the societies concerned, this process seriously tampered even with their basic value pattern. Values baked in the hey-day of feudalism and as exported to the countries by their alien masters now came to be seriously challenged at the hands, first, of their leaders and, then, of the masses. Gradually, as the swirling tide of modernization acquired speed and strength, the traditional barriers – based on caste, class, property and status – began to crumble fast. A mass consciousness about perfect equality among mankind – both at the individual and at the societal (national) planes – came to grip every thinking mind, and consequent thereupon, a universal demand began to be made that basic conditions, guaranteeing equality, be fulfilled in every developing society. One dimension of that demand was 'the universalization' of education, which as Malcolm Adiseshiah puts it, had "the double imperative of 'equality of access to education' and equalization of educational attainments." (ICCE, 1978).

The misfortune of all the developing countries was that the system of education that their erstwhile masters had evolved out for them was highly elitist in character. The educational institutions in general, and of higher learning in particular, had

The author is grateful to his two colleagues – Mr. S. S. Chib and Mr. H. J. Kumar—for having spared some of their time to go through the draft of the paper and giving numerous valuable suggestions.

mostly been located in urban centres. Their awfully limited number, and the exorbitant cost at which they provided education to their wards had jointly conspired against the masses by denying them access even to the basic three 'rs'. The resultant evil of mass scale illiteracy and other consequential ills (ignorance, conservatism and poverty) had vertically divided each one of these societies into two highly uneven segments – the educated haves and the uneducated have-nots. The former few having been armed with a little or more of education had come to constitute that elite class of the society which had managed to grab to themselves all those social, economic and political benefits as trickled from the alien ruling class.

When these societies initiated the process of modernization and political development, their first concern was to throw open to all sections of the population whatever little educational facilities were then available in their respective countries and also to tremendously expand those facilities as fast as they could so that the cherished goal of 'the universalization of education' might be realised as early as possible. But their race against time on this front, as also on many others, was seriously hampered by numerous constraints. To refer to only two of the most important constraints, in the first place, they suffered from an acute lack of finances. Since other aspects of the national life needed equal if not greater attention, the little amount that was channelled towards the expansion and improvement of education was far too little. (The enormity of the problem had been further aggravated by the urgent need of also effecting improvements in the existing system by adequately gearing it up so as to successfully accomplish the task of bringing about a scientific and technological revolution in the country). The second important constraint was the population explosion that had taken place in almost every developing country.

These and other constraints had made it clear to everyone that in case education is to be made freely available to every citizen of the country, its decision-makers must perforce think beyond the traditional system of 'the walled education', particularly in the context of the development of higher education, which, compared to the primary and secondary education, required a far too large an outlay, that was rather difficult to manage. One of the viable alternatives and a suitably tried one was the system of correspondence education.

It may be added that this emergence of the idea of egalitarianism had also radically reshaped people's concept of the university. Earlier, universities were considered to be the seats of higher learning, engaged only in teaching and research. Now it began to be pointed out that universities should also be goaded to perform the task of social reconstruction by assigning to them the additional responsibility of extension education. This point of view was beautifully made by the Vice Chancellor of the Punjab University in one of his addresses to the students of the correspondence courses. He remarked, "The *summum bonum* of university education in the past has been two-fold, teaching and research. In the post-war changed situation the universities can no longer afford to continue to remain sheltered sanctuaries of knowledge abstracted out and divorced from reality, a reality which demands continual reshaping and repatterning of education to conform to socio-economic changes" (Bhan, 1972). The votaries of egalitarianism demanded that the old concept of the learner coming to the university must be discarded and, instead, the university may be brought to the door-steps of those who are keen to receive education and cannot somehow go to the distantly located campuses. A new dimension thus came to be added to the functional pattern of the universities and this provided an additional spur to the initiation of the programme of correspondence education.

Correspondence education, as the term itself explains, "can be defined as organized provision for instruction and education through post, although postal tuition can be supplemented by many other distance media, as well as by face to face teaching." (Glatter and Wedell, 1971 : 11). Keeping in view its objectives, clientele, and the media of its instruction, various persons like to describe it by various terms. Those who go by the scattered habitat of the clientele which this system seeks to cater to, call it 'distance teaching' or 'off campus teaching' (in contrast to the conventional mode of teaching which is done at one single, fixed place — 'on-campus teaching'). Those who try to follow its laudable objective of enabling the learners to do learning in their respective homes and without the aid of their on-the-spot teachers prefer to give it the name of 'home-study system', though this term does not fully explain the concept of correspondence education. For the latter term, as Ronee F. Erdos points out, "implies a teaching responsibility on the part of the

institution or person offering the service: the term home study, with its emphasis on place of study, is sometimes interpreted in the restricted sense of self-instruction" (1967 : 9). The British have preferred to designate their chief institute of correspondence education as the Open University, perhaps for the reason that anyone, irrespective of one's age, place of stay or even without basic minimum qualifications, can join it. The idea of openness, especially in its geographical sense, has recently impelled an author to title his volume on correspondence education as *University Without Walls* (Anand, 1978). The white paper of the British Government (1966) chose to christen their proposed institute of correspondence education as 'A University of the Air', with the hope that it would increasingly make use of the radio as an additional medium of instruction.

Of this multitude of terms, if there is any which fully conveys the concept of this system of instruction, it is perhaps that of correspondence education. As has been rightly pointed out by Glatter and Wedell (in the quotation given earlier), this term implies the use of other media of instruction (besides that of the postal service), including even face to face teaching. At the same time, it also fully explains the objectives that it seeks to to achieve and the nature of the clientele it serves.

As for the rationale of this system, the modern educational technologists have empirically established that, qualitatively, instruction through correspondence is by no means less effective as compared to the classroom teaching¹ Correspondence education is not only a useful medium of instruction for those who cannot find 'room in the classroom' — may be for the reason that the educational institutions of higher learning are either distantly located or are too expensive for them — but also for those who could not somehow receive education at an appropriate stage of their life and are now captivated with the hope that it may help them improve their career prospects and thereby enable them to raise their social status (which in a hierarchy-ridden society, typical of developing countries, is still closely tagged with one's education and profession).

1. In this connection, a reference may be made to some of the British, Australian, Dutch and Southern Rhodesian studies briefly reproduced by Erdos (1967) and also to some Indian studies, to be discussed in the pages to follow.

Besides catering to the needs of those who join correspondence courses with 'qualificatory' and 'compensatory' objectives,² this system of education is particularly useful for those who evince keenness to keep themselves always abreast with day-to-day developments in their respective disciplines (as for instance doctors, engineers or even administrators) or those who wish to diversify their knowledge beyond the beaten track of their discipline or those (particularly housewives and retired persons) who want to keep themselves occupied during their free time. In other words, correspondence education can prove (in fact it has already proved) as a significant tool of continuing education.

History and Development

The system of communication with one another through the medium of correspondence dates back to that remote period of human history when man invented the alphabet and learnt the art of writing. He had then begun sending messages to his far off friends and relatives, sometimes through special messengers and sometimes even through pigeons, trained for the job. This type of communication was, however, confined to the exchange of messages on personal and even public affairs and had never been employed by anyone for instructional purposes. It was Mr. Pitman, an Englishman, who in 1840 perhaps for the first time thought that he could conveniently coach his students by sending written instruction through post. That marked the beginning, though in a very crude way, of what was to emerge in less than a century into a full-fledged new system of education, capable of realising to a very large segment of the human population the highly cherished goal of an egalitarian society.

Following the example of Pitman, a large number of individuals successfully tried this method in various parts of the world with a view to developing and expanding their work of private tuitioning. It was toward the closing year of the 19th century, by which time it had acquired a reasonable degree of legitimacy, that it made its entry into the portals of the university. In 1892, the University of Chicago established a correspondence teaching division of the university's extension department. Thereafter, parallel experiments were also conducted in England and Australia. Since the nature of the courses thus devised was

2. Terms borrowed from Noam Mc Intosh used in her paper : ' Women in Distance Education : The Open University Experience ' (ICCE, 1973).

of a specialized nature, the system as such could not make much of an impact as a viable alternative to the traditional system of classroom teaching. It was after the second world war when a number of European countries, having suffered colossal destruction, found it difficult to cope with the fast growing demand of their nationals for higher education, that the medium of correspondence education was adopted on a fairly large scale. In less than half a decade, this system marked unprecedented heights of popularity, thereby enabling these war-torn countries of Europe to successfully overcome their immediate problem of catering to the educational needs of their youth and also showing a new path to the developing countries.

Highly impressed by this success, Mr. K. L. Shrimali, the Union Minister for Education in the sixties, imaginatively thought of giving a trial to this experiment in India with a view to testing whether it can also provide an answer to the complex educational requirements of the Indian youth. It was under his inspiration and guidance that a school of correspondence education was established in the Delhi University in 1962 in the form of a pilot project. This school not only absorbed the overflow of students from the colleges of the region but also kindled in the minds of numerous persons who had not somehow been able to enjoy the privilege of university education, a hope that 'justice in arrears' — to borrow the phrase from professor Bakshish Singh (1978) — would after all be done to them.

In 1964, the Education Commission was constituted by the Government of India to comprehensively look at the educational system of the country in the context of the needs of a developing society and to suggest the needed changes therein. This commission highly lauded the system of correspondence education and recommended that in order to bring education to those who are unable even to attend part-time courses, wide-spread organization of correspondence courses should be attempted. It also comprehensively spelt out the objectives and pattern of these courses and desired that correspondence education be undertaken at the university level. These recommendations went a long way in encouraging various universities of the country to ambitiously undertake this programme. Some of them were being subjected to a lot of pressure by the society to open more and more colleges so as to absorb the evergrowing outflow of students, for which they had little resources while some others were facing financial

hardship resulting from the establishment of new universities in the region, and the consequent disaffiliation of the colleges from them. This endorsement of the scheme of correspondence education by the Education Commission was viewed by all such universities as a boon in disguise. The years to follow witnessed an unprecedented expansion of the correspondence education in the country.

In 1968, the University of Rajasthan and the Punjabi University, Patiala established the institutes of correspondence courses. A year later, two more such institutes, namely those of Mysore and Meerut, were born.

The year 1971 proved highly auspicious for the development of this system. In that year five more institutes—Chandigarh, Simla, Madurai, Bombay and Ludhiana (that of the Department of Extension Education, Punjab Agriculture University) — were added, thereby raising the total number in the country to 10. From that year onward, the programme went on scaling new and new heights. Today, the number of these institutes has gone up to 33.

Coverage, Courses and Clientele

Of the 33 institutes, imparting instruction through the medium of correspondence, 25 have been set up by the universities or are affiliated to them, 4 are managed by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), one each by the Union Government (Directorate of Hindi) and the Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages and the remaining two by Boards of School Education (Bhopal and Delhi).

Twenty-three of these institutions, functioning on traditional lines prepare students for their first degree examination in Arts (23) and Commerce (13). Of these, 9 also run post-graduate courses mostly in Political Science, History, English and Hindi. The teaching of Science is undertaken nowhere, though Delhi School of Correspondence did make a venture in 1971 by instituting a B. Sc. course. But it had to be wound up just the following year on account of poor response from students.

Some of these institutions offer, in addition to the traditional courses, a few job oriented courses. One of these highly popular courses is that of the teachers' training. The National Council of Educational Research and Training has undertaken a massive programme of providing training to both the in-service

teachers and the freshers by instituting correspondence courses at its four regional centres – Ajmer, Bhopal, Bhubaneshwar and Mysore. Besides them, the degree course for teachers' training has been instituted by four more institutes (Srinagar, Jammu, Jaipur and Mysore). The Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages, Hyderabad provides a certificate course in the teaching of English, while the Srinagar institute makes a similar arrangement for the in-service teachers of Hindi and Urdu. Other job-oriented courses relate to the office management, library science, journalism, tourism and hotel management, financial management, operation research for management and law. The two agriculture universities (Ludhiana and Pant Nagar) provide courses in farming techniques, and home management and family life, the latter exclusively meant for women. Compared to the traditional courses, the job-oriented courses are under-developed from the viewpoint of both the number of institutes, imparting such courses and the size of the clientele they have been able to attract. But happily enough, they are fast catching the imagination of the people. The statistical data, as collected by Rudra Datt for his paper *Development of Correspondence Courses in India : A Survey-cum-Stocktaking*, presented to the National Seminar on Correspondence Education, Chandigarh, 1979, reveals that the number of students taking up job-oriented courses through correspondence has registered a rise of 9.26 times (i. e. from 712 in 1973-74 to 6,596 in 1977-78), whereas the corresponding rise for the total enrolment in these courses in colleges, universities and correspondence institutes, has only been 1.47 times (i. e. from 55,974 to 82,618). This data, further reveals that the traditional B. A. courses in Arts and Humanities seem to have lost their appeal to the students. The percentage of students enrolled in B. A. to the total enrolment in various courses all over the country (through correspondence) has dwindled from 69.2 per cent in 1973-74 to 39.6 per cent in 1977-78. On the other hand, the percentage of students in *B. Com*, *M A*, and *M. Ed.* has registered an increase (i. e. respectively from 12.1 to 20.7, from 16.0 to 27.5 and from 1.0 to 2.0).

The Madurai institute has also introduced since 1977 the 'open university system.' Any resident of Tamil Nadu state above the age of 25 years can join the institute for his bachelor's degree even if he does not possess the minimum qualifications.

For such students, the institute conducts pre-foundation and foundation courses before giving them the degree courses. The first two courses provide them with the necessary grounding. This system has also been quite popular. In 1978-79, 1315 persons got themselves enrolled in it.

Geographically, the present 33 institutes which maintain traditional type of courses, are unevenly spread over the length and breadth of the country. The northern region (comprising Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Chandigarh and Delhi) and the southern region (Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Pandichery) have 7 institutes each, but the size of the population they cater for is highly uneven — 36 and 136 millions respectively. More surprising, the western region (Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Goa, Daman and Diu with a population of 104 million, has 4 such institutes, whereas the eastern and central regions have 2 each. Still more surprising, the whole of the north eastern region (comprising West Bengal, Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Tripura, Manipur, Sikkim, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh) does not have even a single institute.

This uneven distribution of institutes, though reflecting by no means the educational development of various regions, does however establish the fact that somewhere institutes have unduly come to be cluttered up and somewhere no institute exists at all. The former phenomenon has not only led to an unhealthy inter-institutional competition (this gets aggravated when various neighbouring institutes provide for the same type of courses) but has also rendered some of them economically unviable, ultimately impinging upon the quality of instruction.

As for the clientele, the correspondence courses were originally conceived to cater to the educational needs of those who had been (to borrow the phrases from Malcolm Adiseshiah — ICCE, 1978) 'left out', 'pushed out' or 'dropped out' of the educational institutions. In other words, the emphasis in enrolment was on the employed persons who were keen to improve their educational qualifications. Thus, the majority of the students in the correspondence institutes all over the country were employed people and of the higher age group. In the course of the past few years, this situation seems to be changing fast. The number of employed people has steeply come down to 47 per cent as far as the nation-wide situation is

concerned. In the Delhi institute, their number has shrunk to barely 20 per cent (Singh, 1978). Conversely, correspondence education has begun to catch the imagination of the younger people who despite their being eligible to join colleges and universities have now been enrolling themselves with these institutes. This trend may partially be due to the reason that the old backlog of those employed people, who had been waiting for an opportunity to improve their qualifications, might have been exhausted and partially due to the reason that the number of the college-going youth is multiplying fast, on account of the population explosion, whereas the number of colleges has not kept pace with population increase. It may also be added that the modern youth has been increasingly gripped by the psychology of 'learn while you earn.'

Another noteworthy trend (emerging from the former trend) is that the rural people are also coming up in an ever-increasing number to join these institutes. In the Chandigarh institute the number of rural students has registered a rise of 134 per cent, whereas that of urban students has come down to 93 per cent (from 1971-72 to 1978-79).³

Tools and Techniques of Teaching

The central objective of teaching is to communicate knowledge from one mind to another. In the conventional system of education, this objective is achieved through the word of the mouth - teacher talking straight to his students in the situational context of the classroom. The new system of correspondence education, seeking as it does to cater to the educational needs of a spatially scattered student clientele, must necessarily adopt the medium of correspondence and, as such, rely mainly on the printed word. But that does not in any way offset the need to substantiate the medium of correspondence through other media aids. Since the objective is to communicate knowledge, the printed word can be suitably supplemented by such other communication methods as radio broadcasts, television, video tapes, telephone and even occasional face-to-face contact. Therefore, to understand correspondence education strictly in its literal sense is to have not only its partial but a highly erroneous view.

Speaking strictly in the context of the Indian situation, where highly developed communication media such as telephone,

3. Refer to the Institute Annual Report, 1978-79.

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television, video tapes and the like are beyond the reach of the common man (either because these are not available in the country or because these involve heavy cost), correspondence education largely adopts two media of instruction – written lesson scripts and occasional spells of personal contact with students. At certain places, radio broadcasting has also been switched in to service. We may briefly look at the manner in which these teaching aids are utilized.

Lesson-Scripts

As hinted earlier, lesson scripts constitute the primary or basic medium of instruction. As per practice obtaining all over the country, the faculty members in charge of various disciplines split up the prescribed course of instruction into a number of integrated units (each unit, containing one or more inter-related topics) and then develop full length lessons on each one of these units. The lessons are generally comprehensive descriptions/explanations of various topics and are well illustrated with the help of suitable examples, diagrams, statistical tables, charts, etc. These lessons are then printed (or even cyclostyled in case the number of students is comparatively small) and mailed to the students at regular intervals. This is how the medium of printed lessons is tailored to the needs of the students of correspondence courses.

Sometimes the wisdom of sending full-length lessons is questioned. The main grouse of the critics is that those lessons tend to reduce teaching to spoon feeding and also that they demotivate students from doing extensive reading. For, the whole matter is available in the capsuled form in those lessons. They, therefore, suggest that the institutes of correspondence education should send to their students guidelines on how various topics may be studied and supplement them with annotated bibliographic notes on the prescribed books. To overcome the problem of the non-availability of books in rural areas and elsewhere, they suggest that the packages of reading material should also contain extracts from books and journals, relevant to various topics. This method, they strongly recommend, must be applied to the postgraduate studies. There is no doubt a sufficient weight in what these critics point out, but the fact must not be ignored that the majority of the clientele of these institutes is a handicapped lot – handicapped by such factors as their



being widely scattered, their lack of access to libraries, their poor economic conditions, the narrow objective with which they join these courses, and their absence of contact with fellow students. These factors underline the desirability of supplying them reading material which may suitably and also exhaustively explain to them various concepts, theories, pieces of literature and such other subtle aspects of their prescribed courses. Also it must not be overlooked that, unlike the students of the conventional institutions, they are supposed to prosecute their studies all by themselves, without the active and on-the-spot guidance of their teachers. In such a situation, correspondence reading material constitutes their main (and in most of the cases, the only) reliance. The lessons must, therefore, be exhaustively written. In addition to these lessons, extra reading material in the form of extracts from books and journals and annotated bibliographic notes may be sent, if possible. The method of sending full-length lessons has also been adopted by the institutes of the developed and highly affluent societies, including the Open University of Great Britain.

The objection that these lesson scripts may reduce correspondence teaching to mere spoon-feeding, though highly cogent, can be conveniently overcome if lesson-scripts are carefully prepared. Lesson-writing has a technique of its own. A lesson is decidedly far different from a book, on the one hand, and a research paper, on the other. Unlike the former, a lecture-script, as Satyapal Anand aptly remarks, "is a set of notes, specifically tailored for a distant student ..." (1978, 77). Conceived as such, a lesson needs to be written in an easy and intelligible style, making use of a pedestrian type of language (lest a student should run every now and then for the dictionary). It should be properly and carefully illustrated with pictures, diagrams, charts, tables and the like so that it may be conveniently comprehended by the distantly-located students. Care should also be taken to see that, as far as possible, the lesson reflects an element of informality so that the students have the psychological impression that their teacher is speaking to them through the script. The lesson should also arouse their curiosity. Above all, in-built exercises may be inducted into the script at every such juncture where one sub-theme/sub-topic/ concept ends and the other begins. These exercises, besides providing breathing space to the reader, will furnish him with a check list,

with the help of which he can himself find out his degree of assimilation. Highlighting the qualities of a lesson-script, Erdos observes: "Whether a correspondence course is written for university students or school children...it must contain those features which make a correspondence course a teaching instrument. It must guide the student's studies, aid him in the assimilation of knowledge and skill, give him practice in the use of his knowledge and skill, and test his understanding and attainment to find out where he needs additional help." (1967:14).

Keeping these basic postulates of a lesson-script in view it can be safely assumed that lesson-writing has a technique of its own which needs to be perfected by every teacher of the correspondence education. Earlier the widely prevalent impression was that everyone—teacher or research scholar—who knows the subject, can bring out a good lesson. But as we learnt by experience and also by training, ⁴ lessons written by 'outsiders' lacked the requisite degree of efficacy, because these, having been written by eminent professors, proved to be much beyond the grasp of an average student of the correspondence courses, partly because these had been written in a rough and drab style and partly because they contain too much of jargon.

Finally, it may also be mentioned that lesson-scripts need to be periodically vetted, up-dated and even reviewed. The question of review has often posed problems as to who should undertake this work—internal teachers or outside experts. Consensus on the issue, developed after considerable experimentation and discussion, is that the work of lesson reviewing be done by both of them — the former looking into the style, language and efficacy, while the latter taking care of the subject matter.

To sum up, lesson - scripts which Anand describes as the 'back - bone of correspondence teaching' must be carefully prepared, reviewed and pre - tested before these are mailed to the students, and in the subsequent years, these must be regularly vetted and updated in the light of the feedback received from students and others, and the day-to-day developments in the discipline concerned.

4. In this connection reference may be made to the two workshops that the three experts from the Open University of Great Britain recently organized at Chandigarh and Madurai in collaboration with the U. G. C. and the British Council.

Even the slightest degree of laxity that might be shown with regard to the preparation of these scripts would not only render the quality of instruction weak but would also rob the system of correspondence education of its basic purpose.

Personal Contact Programme

By no stretch of imagination the utility of a direct-face-to face contact between the teacher and the taught can ever be under-estimated. The correspondence education programme, as explained above, is an innovation emerging not from the rejection of the conventional class-room teaching (that method is still universally acclaimed to be the best), but by the compulsions of the new situation. It would therefore be adding to the effectiveness of the correspondence education programme if the cold printed word is suitably supplemented by occasional, if not regular, face-to-face teaching. Besides enhancing the quality of instruction, personal contact programme can facilitate the solution of many a problem – academic, administrative and even personal. Emphasising its usefulness, S. S. Chib observes : “ In nutshell, these Instructional-cum-Personal Contact Programmes extend a sense of belonging to the postal course students which is a very important and vital instrument of imparting encouragement and confidence to the students. These contacts, besides giving intensive coaching, revision-cum-refresher courses, and tendering solution to many of the students’ academic and administrative problems, demonstrate to them that behind the lecture scripts in cold and silent print, there are human faces sincerely dedicated to their intellectual welfare ” (1977 : 98).

As to the mode and manner of the personal contact between the teacher and the taught, it can be forged in more than one way. One of the most usually accepted and widely practised method is that of holding brief spells of, what has come to be known as, the personal contact programmes. Each institute picks up a few stations (number depending upon many factors) where there is a sizable concentration of its students and organizes once or twice a year these contact camps of a small duration, ranging from one to two weeks. At the fixed place and at the punctual hour, the students of the area concerned come and attend classes there. These camps are mostly organized with a view to do ‘ capsuled type ’ of teaching, thereby supplementing, illustrating and explaining the material already sent to the students.

More often than not, teaching as also learning (on the part of the students) is primarily done in a manner that will best facilitate success in the university examination. To that end, the whole instructional exercise is suitably tailored and all topics, considered important from the examination point of view, are thoroughly discussed.

The tight daily schedule of work, on the one hand (a teaching day generally begins around 5 O'clock in the evening so that the working people employed in various governmental and private establishments may be able to come, and it lasts till 9 or 9 30 p. m.), and the large number of subjects to be taught, on the other, reduce these personal contact programmes to only teaching sessions, leaving little time for other things. It has often been observed that the students meet their teachers only in the class-room. For, during the rest of the time they are either busy attending other classes or, if free, they rush back home. The real purpose of establishing a meaningful contact with the students is thus badly frustrated.

The meagreness of the contact apart, even the instructional component remains weak. For, due to the lack of time, audio-visual aids—such as over-head projector, slides, films, video tapes etc.—which have been eulogised as highly useful scientific tools of modern science, cannot be used.

Another drawback in this type of personal contact exercise is that its scope is extremely limited in the sense that it seeks to cover only that little fraction of the student body (empirical research puts the figure anywhere between 30 and 40 per cent of the whole) which makes it convenient to attend the programme. The rest who live at far off places and cannot be reached, are left out. They have no option but to exclusively depend upon the lesson-scripts.

In addition to these short spells of personal contact programme, the other method by which contact can be established is that of the *counselling services*. Counselling, though a pompous word, in fact implies, as Ian Mc D. Mitchell describes “ a friendly chat, a helpful word, information giving, advice exchange, guidance, counselling per therapy (in its various forms), teaching (in decision-making processes and study techniques, etc.) inter-personal interaction, body language, ‘red-tape’ cutting. Whenever two or more persons relate, counselling may occur ” (ICCE,

1978, 258). Understood as such, counselling is highly needed by the students of the correspondence courses, because, unacquainted with the study skills of higher education and unguided as they mostly happen to be, they need to be guided about such basic techniques, how to study the reading material, how to take notes out of it, how to attempt home assignments, how to pass university examination, and, above all, what are the various administrative requirements they are supposed to meet and how to meet them, and myriad other types of allied things.

Some of the correspondence courses abroad (note-worthy among which may be listed the British Open University or the Learning Consultant Network established by the Regional Learning Service of Central New York, attached to Syracuse University) have organized highly staffed counselling services. In India, we do not have such an elaborate arrangement. But we do provide counselling services to our students when they come to the headquarters and meet their teachers or when the latter go out to organize the personal contact programmes. The Chandigarh institute has also successfully experimented by organizing, what it described as Orientation Programme at a very large number of stations. During the two-day programme at each station, the newly enrolled students (the programme was organized in the very initial stages of the academic session) are oriented with the working of the institute and are also given a general over-view of the study programme and learning skills. In addition, the institution of the Sunday classes which has been regularly functioning in Delhi, Chandigarh and elsewhere for some time also affords an opportunity for the students to seek guidance from their teachers.

The institution of regional study centres which has shown a remarkable degree of success in the Open University of Great Britain (it has established a vast network of centres.) could not make much of a progress in this country. Some of the institutes of correspondence education in India have also established study centres. But unfortunately, these have turned out to be the extension wings of the libraries of those colleges with whose courtesy these have been housed there. For, our notion of a study centre is that it consists of a few almirahs of books, lying locked in one corner of the library. Whenever some student turns up the library clerk or the peon (who are paid a monthly pittance of rupees fifty or hundred in the case of the former and ten

to fifteen in the case of the latter) loans to him the books, all the while casting frowning looks for having bothered him. This type of behaviour, combined with the non-availability of any type of academic guidance or counselling service discourages the students from paying a second visit. The result is that these so-called study centres have come to be reduced to a mere farce. If they are to be developed into lively centres of active academic life, it is very important that they must be staffed by a sizable team of teachers who should always be available to the students to provide them guidance and advice. In other words, we should model these centres, preferably, on the lines of the Open University of Great Britain.

Radio Talks

Radio is another very effective medium of communication and can profitably be utilized for strengthening the instructional programme of correspondence system of education. The great advantage of this medium over all other mediums is that it does not involve the slightest degree of physical displacement of a student from his place of stay or work. Even while comfortably sitting in his cozy bed and enjoying a cup of tea, he can conveniently get academic instruction on a particular topic and that too in the live voice of his teacher. What he is to do is simply to switch on his radio set on a certain specified frequency and listen to the talk. The convenience that it provides to the listener and the comparatively little or no cost that it involves have made this method highly popular almost everywhere.

The idea of seeking the support of the radio for distance learning scheme was first mooted by Germans. Though people have been employing radio broadcasting for educational purpose since as early as 1924, it was the Hessen Broadcasting Corporation which mooted for the first time the idea of developing radio colleges and established one in Germany in 1966. Encouraged by the success of this experiment, four regional stations of that country pooled their resources and launched what came to be popularly known as 'Quadiga Radio Colleges'.⁵ These experiments provided a new dimension to the very concept of distance learning. The idea rapidly caught the imagination of almost all those nations which embarked upon the programme of correspondence courses. The British Broadcasting Corporation

5. For the details of their functioning see Anand, 1978 : 150-51.

(B. B. C.) has put one full frequency at the disposal of the Open University. Similar facilities have also been accorded elsewhere to their respective institutes.

In India where radio broadcasting service is state owned, the All India Radio expresses its inability to spare time for the institutes of correspondence courses on the plea that their programmes are already too much packed. Only 4 institutes, namely Delhi, Chandigarh, Patiala and Madurai, have been able to persuade their regional stations to squeeze time for them.

The reluctance of the All India Radio apart, there is also the problem of coverage. If some institute succeeds in persuading the regional station to make arrangement to broadcast its talks, the coverage of the station (as has been the case with all regional stations) would be so limited that all students cannot avail of this facility. Quite a large number of them might be living far beyond its spatial coverage range. This problem is not peculiar to India alone. It is faced all over the world. The University of Waterloo has tried to overcome it by preparing cassettes and sending them to their distantly located students who may listen to them at their end whenever they so choose. This type of practice cannot be adopted in India for obvious reasons.

As for the efficacy of the radio talks, the present situation is not very happy and encouraging. In the first place, most of the speakers (who invariably happen to be the teachers of the institutes) do not seem to have perfected the art of either preparing a radio worthy talk or broadcasting it. Both these facets of the radio talk are by no means a layman's task. These need to be learnt and perfected. Recently two regional workshops (already referred to) were organized by the experts from the Open University. One of the important areas covered by them was that of the radio talks. Earlier too, the Chandigarh and the Patiala institutes had also organized in collaboration with the All India Radio, Jullundur, two workshops on the same subject. As a result of these workshops, the quality of talks has shown considerable improvement which is manifest in the fact that the earlier pattern of one-voice talks has been radically modified by introducing (in addition to the talks) radio-features, discussions and student-teacher dialogues on the pattern of the class-room teaching. All these are done by the teachers of the Chandigarh and Patiala institutes who have a permanent collaboration with each other in this respect. The objective is to make radio talks

interesting, lively and effective. It may be added that the schedule of talks for the whole year is prepared well ahead of the commencement of the academic session and it is circulated to the students so that they may do the necessary preparation to receive the broadcast. These talks are also recorded in the institutes with a view to playing them later on for the benefit of those who might like to listen to them again. Some of them are played at the time of the personal contact programme. These have proved to be quite helpful to the students.

Another very effective media aid, which has already exelled the radio, is the television. In Great Britain, the former in comparison with the latter has been now relegated to the secondary importance. Television commands superiority over the radio in the sense that where radio has only an audio effect, the television also combines with it the visual effect, and thus tremendously enhances the quality of instruction for the distance learner. As regards its use in India for purposes of the correspondence education, its services have not so far been channelised in this direction, perhaps because of its being still in a rudimentary stage of development. But it can be reasonably hoped that the day is not far off when it would also assist the distance educators in their ambitious mission.

Response-Sheet Assignment

Thus far, we have been looking into the tools and techniques that the institutes of correspondence education employ in order to reach out to their students and impart instruction to them. Education is a two-way process of communication in which the teacher talks to his students and the latter respond to his instruction by various methods by posing questions and queries, by giving meaningful looks, by other types of gestures and even by writing notes, thereby providing to him the necessary feedback, which helps sustain the interest of both the teacher and the taught in the exercise in hand. The necessity of some sort of a feedback is felt all the more in the programme of teaching by correspondence, for the simple reason that the students are spatially so much separated from their teachers that quite a few of them never get throughout their stay of 3 to 6 years in the institute an opportunity of meeting their teachers, much less of developing closer ties with them. One useful device developed in this connection is that of response-sheet assignment.

At the end of each or alternate lesson (or even with the

last lesson of a certain series), a set of questions, emerging out of the topic or topics, is appended. The students are instructed to write out answers to those questions and mail them to the institute concerned. This set of questions is described as response-sheet assignment. At their end, the students attempt those questions, write out the answers thereof and then mail them to the institute where the evaluators evaluate them. The job of evaluating these response-sheets is generally handled by the teachers of the institute. The surplus quota (i. e. the overflow which is beyond their capacity) is however passed on to the part-time evaluators, who happen to be the teachers of the neighbouring colleges and university departments working on contractual basis. The evaluators are supposed not only to grade the response-sheets but also to give profuse comments, pointing out the deficiencies in the answers to various questions, making concrete suggestions about how to effect qualitative improvements and thereby providing to the students meaningful guidance. When the evaluators have finished their job, the tutor-marked-assignments -TMAs (as the Open University people describe them at this stage) - are returned to the students, who are expected to look into them and adopt the follow-up action.

The response-sheet assignments, as explained in the foregoing paragraph, if carefully handled at both the ends, can prove to be a highly useful channel of two-way communication between the teacher and the taught. For, through this instrumentality, the former is enabled to know how his instructional material is being taken by his students, and the latter also gets an opportunity to get his periodic performance assessed at the hands of his teacher. In other words, the institution of the response-sheet assignments functions as an eye-opener for both of them.

There are, however, two main pitfalls. First, the students need to be continually motivated to attend to this work seriously and regularly. In the Indian context where a very large number of students, even in the conventional colleges and university departments, take up various courses with the limited objective of passing the university examination, generally lay more emphasis on cramming up the lessons and that too only those which are considered important from the examination point of view. Obviously, they do not pay much attention to the response-sheet aspect of their studies. An idea of the casualness on their part can be had from the annual report of the Chandigarh institute

for the year 1978-79. Their statistics reveal that the percentage of the response-sheet assignments submitted by the students to the total number sent to them varies from 64.66 (for B. Com. Part III) to 6.30 (for M. A. Part II-History). Even this percentage may not be reflecting the true picture of performance, for the reason that there may be students who might be doing the assignments regularly whereas there may also be others who might not have sent even one single assignment. The same institute has also tried to look into this aspect of the problem. Its findings reveal that the percentage of students who did not submit any response sheet in the course of full one academic session was as high as 69.00 (in case of M. A. Public Administration, Semesters III and IV) or 57.56 (M. A. Public Administration, Semesters I and II). In no case it was less than 12.5. It is thus established that a fairly large proportion of students pay little or no heed to this work.

In order to discourage students from taking this work so casually, some institutes have introduced an element of compulsion by prescribing a certain minimum percentage of assignments which everyone must submit in order to earn the eligibility to appear in the university examination. This experiment does not seem to have met the desired degree of success. The unwilling element, defying in nature as it generally is, adopts the tactics of just scribbling a few pages and mailing them to the institutes in the form of response-sheet assignment and thus fulfilling the eligibility condition. No amount of compulsion can bring the recalcitrants to book. If there is a method which may help bring good results, it is that of persuasion. The teachers can provide the requisite amount of motivation by repeatedly emphasising the need and usefulness of the response-sheet assignments, by means of both formal and informal communications.

The other pitfall with regard to the response-sheet assignments occurs at the evaluators' end. As hinted earlier, the evaluation of these assignments is far different from the evaluation of the university answer books. In the latter case, the evaluators are supposed only to grade the scripts; but here the basic objective is to assist the student in improving the quality of his performance. An evaluator⁶ is, therefore, required to make

6. In fact it is wrong to describe those who handle this work as evaluators in view of the low priority accorded to the evaluation aspect. The Open University people designate them as tutors.

profuse comments by way of guidance and help. But it has been observed that not all the evaluators do this work in the manner it is expected of them, either due to their non-familiarity with the work (this is more true of the outside evaluators) or due to the lack of commitment to the cause. The Chandigarh institute has recently held a series of workshops to train, first, their own teachers and then the outside evaluators wherein the participants were given a short-term training in the art of response-sheet evaluation both by means of theoretical discussions and practical demonstration. In addition, the said institute and perhaps many others have evolved the method of snap checking the bundles of these TMA's, as are handled by the outside evaluators, thereby exercising some sort of a control on the performance of those who do the work on contract basis. In this way, efforts are made everywhere to effect improvements in the evaluation and speedy disposal of the response-sheet assignments in the light of the experience, gained over the years.

Faculty

One of the important, rather the most important, components of the managerial structure of the institute of correspondence education is its faculty. It is upon the faculty that the whole success or failure of this new system depends. If the reading material is ably prepared, personal contact programmes are efficiently conducted, response-sheets are effectively evaluated and sincere efforts are made to establish a meaningful contact with the students, the latter would get a sense of satisfaction and fulfilment and that is one of the important goals of this new system of education. Thus meant to play the central role, it is highly imperative that the faculty should be of a high order. Its members should combine in them the twin merits of scholarship and flair for writing. Conversely, if some laxity is shown in their selection, the whole programme would stand crucified at the altar of incompetence.

As for the situation operating now, the teaching in the institutes of correspondence education is dubbed as second grade. This unfortunate impression has come to be created partly for the reason that the correspondence education programme does not involve so much of active classroom teaching and partly for the reason that too much of desk work reduces the teachers to official functionaries and that too of a poor order. Both these

things are considered in this country as most unteacher like and have adversely affected the quality of teachers in these institutes. For, the first rate scholars prefer to join the university departments and the colleges. The poor availability of good teachers, combined with such other evils as favouritism and nepotism (highly rampant in India today) deprives these institutes of the services of really good teachers who may not only be good scholars but should have a sense of commitment toward the programme.

These deep-seated maladies apart, the decision makers at the university and the government levels are also responsible to a very great extent for the faculty problems of these institutes. Mostly, hailing from the university teaching departments and the colleges, the decision makers do not somehow look kindly to them. This prejudice on their part colours their basic approach to the needs and problems of these institutes. One of the important areas which has not received their sympathetic attention is the faculty needs of these institutes. They seem to have developed an impression that faculty does not have much to do here and, as a result, what we find is that there are a number of institutes which have barely no faculty of their own and exclusively depend upon the goodwill and generosity of the teachers of the university teaching departments and colleges who prepare the reading material for them and also evaluate the response-sheet assignments on contractual basis. These institutes are mostly run by their directors with the assistance of a few office functionaries and a handful of teachers. With the exception of only one institute (Madurai), none else has created Professors' posts. Even those which make a provision for Readers are comparatively very few (5 out of 23). Most of the institutes are manned by Lecturers. This type of staff patterning lowers, on the one hand, the morale of the teachers because of the lack of adequate promotional avenues, and, on the other, the quality of instruction and the image of the institute. Conversely, if the number of senior positions available in the institute is large, it may be able to attract men of better calibre and consequent thereupon its instructional material may also show qualitative improvement and, above all, the system of correspondence education will also earn the much desired degree of respectability (one of the

reasons for the poor impression of these institutes is that, being in most of the cases the constituent units of the universities, they are far too inadequately staffed in comparison to the teaching departments). It may also be added that the nature of the work (writing, vetting, and updating of scripts) also demands that there should be a faculty of a very high order.

The functional capability of teachers depends upon the degree of challenge that they receive at the hands of their students. The institutes of correspondence education do not have any such mechanism by means of which the teacher may receive continuous challenge and derive inspiration for personal improvement. No doubt, the task of writing and vetting of lesson-scripts does demand of the teachers that they should involve themselves in research activities and keep themselves abreast with day to day developments in their respective disciplines. But the scheme of things is such that even if they do not study and up-date their knowledge, they can conveniently carry on their work. The obvious outcome is that the performance of those teachers in research activities is far inadequate.

The faculty is headed by the director or the principal, who also functions as the administrative head of the institute. Even though they are drawn from the teaching profession and are supposed to be subject specialists, the directors seldom involve themselves in academic activities such as preparation of reading material teaching at personal contact programmes or the like and, instead, remain exclusively occupied in administrative work. Their non-involvement in academics not only reduces them to administrative heads but also separates them from the heads of the teaching departments of the university, with whom they seek parity both in regard to their status and salary. This gap gets further widened when the directors' academic standing in their respective disciplines is comparatively not as highly impressive as that of the heads of the teaching departments. The latter develop in them a sense of superiority not only for themselves, but also for their departments. The comparatively poor calibre of the faculty of the institutes also contributes, in no small measure, to reinforcing this type of a superiority complex on their part. At this juncture, when the system of correspondence education is in need of acquiring for itself an all round respectability and legitimacy, it is highly imperative that it makes serious efforts to furnish itself with a really competent and committed faculty,

including the director. The Open University of Great Britain, while in its infancy, had also confronted a parallel situation of its poor acceptability at the hands of its people. But by recruiting teachers of high calibre (who in their turn spared no effort in strengthening its various instructional programmes) it could soon carve out for itself a dignified place in the community of centres of higher education. Today it commands as much respect as any other university does in that country, including the Oxford and Cambridge universities.

Supporting Services

The preparation of the instructional material is a long and arduous process. A lesson-script, after having been written, vetted and up-dated, needs to be carefully edited and illustrated with the help of diagrams, charts, maps, pictures, cartoons and the like. Later on when it is sent to the press for printing, it is to be set in type, proofs are to be checked, print order to be placed and, finally it is to be stitched or bound. It is only after these processes have been successfully gone through that it gets ready for despatch. To properly handle all these varied operations, the institute requires, besides teachers, the services of editors, cartographers, photographers, compositors, proof readers, copy holders, etc. In addition, it also needs media experts who may be able to tailor the written scripts (at least some of them) into suitable radio talks and telecasts, and also assist the teachers in learning the art of broadcasting. To further forge a closer contact between the teachers and the taught, the institute needs the services of technicians who may help prepare audio-visual aids like slides and films.

In this way, we find that the institute needs various types of experts. But, unfortunately, little attention is paid to this aspect of preparation of instructional material. There is hardly an institute in the country which has realised the significance of these supporting services. So far, the practice everywhere has been that the institutes may at best provide for the services of a cartographer (and that too, only if it is to teach geography) and a technician (the latter for handling the public address system, tape recorder or the overhead projector). But none has ever thought in terms of making a provision for either media experts or photographers. Considering the services of these persons as a luxury and a wastage of resources, the institutes

seem to think that those who are assigned radio talks can conveniently prepare them on their own; according to them the writing or the delivering of radio talks is not the job of a specialist. Only recently, it has been recognised that broadcasting is also an art and a technique, which needs to be learnt and perfected.

As regards production of the instructional material, the institutes generally assign it to private presses on contractual basis. No institute has so far set up a printing press of its own. A few, of course, do maintain the services of proof readers, copy holders and even of editors and production experts. But this is too inadequate a provision, for the printing done on contractual basis is never satisfactory. The obvious outcome is that lesson-scripts, so ably written make a poor and disgusting reading. The institutes should, therefore, realise the importance of all these supporting services of para-academic nature in improving their own efficiency.

Another facet of the institute's organizational set-up is its administrative wing. Just as it is essential that the lesson-scripts are ably written, properly illustrated and printed, it is equally important that they are sent to the students in time. To do this and to provide numerous other types of managerial services to the students, each institute maintains an office establishment. Generally being an extension of the registrar's office of the university concerned, its organizational pattern resembles that of the registrar's office. It is headed either by a deputy or an assistant registrar and comprises superintendents, assistants, clerks and stenographers. Keeping in view the voluminous and diverse nature of the work that it handles and also the fact that the whole programme is time bound (in the sense that all operations are to be gone through in the course of one academic session), the administrative section needs to be always kept in the top gear. At the same time, there ought to prevail a good understanding between the academic and the administrative wings of the institute. Unless the two move hand in hand, the institute cannot satisfactorily provide the needed services to the students.

Retrospect and Prospects

Judged in the context of the long strides that the system of correspondence education has taken during the last one decade, it can be safely concluded that it has come to stay in the country. But the way various institutes have come to be established has

left much to be desired. In the first place, they have not been able to attract a very large number of students. During the preceding five years (1973-74 to 1977-78) the enrolment in all these institutes in the country has no doubt increased from 2.1 per cent of the total enrolment in universities, colleges and these institutes to 3.6 per cent (refer Datt, 1979). But it has remained far below the proposed national target of 20 per cent by 1980-81. In other words, this implies that the programme has somehow not been able to catch the imagination of the people and has thus failed to emerge as a viable alternative to the conventional system.

In the second place, these institutes do not seem to have been set up in any planned manner. Good many of them have come up just as a result of the desire on the part of the universities to have such institutes of their own. While establishing them or while embarking upon the expansion of their academic programmes, these universities appear to have given scant attention to their economic viability. The net outcome is that, while in some states/regions there is a plethora of these institutes (Jammu and Srinagar institutes in Jammu and Kashmir state; Chandigarh, Simla, Patiala and Kurukshetra institutes within a radius of 50 miles), there are regions where no such institute exists at all. This ill-planned, rather unplanned, growth and more particularly poor inter-institutional coordination with regard to the courses that they give (Chandigarh, Patiala and Simla institutes, for instance, conduct post-graduate courses in Political Science, History, English, Economics, Punjabi, etc. and the syllabi in each subject are by and large identical) have resulted in the frittering away of the resources. In view of this overlap, the University Grants Commission (U. G. C.) which coordinates the functioning of universities in the country would be well advised to set up a study team to recommend ways to check this wastage of resources. This may be achieved either by fixing the territorial jurisdiction of these institutes or by making them collaborate with one another with regard to the courses that they offer. But the ideal solution would be that only one institute in a region may be allowed to conduct one course. This type of an arrangement would not only help conserve the resources, but would also lead to qualitative improvement in instruction.

In the third place, the basic approach to the system of correspondence education on the part of both the government

and the universities needs to be radically reshaped. They seem to believe that the system of correspondence education, compared to the conventional class-room system, is far cheaper and with its help a larger percentage of students can be provided with education. This notion has done the maximum harm to the development of the correspondence education in the country. Besides their stingy attitude towards the requirements of the institutes of correspondence education (some aspects of which we have already highlighted earlier), they do not treat the students of this stream at par with those of the other. The government does not make any provision for scholarships, fee-concession and any such monetary assistance to them. The government does not even consider their case for travel concession while they go to attend the personal contact programmes, or for special leave to those employees who care to join them. These are some of the disincentives. Then neither the government nor the U. G. C. helps the institutes to build hostels for the out-station students who occasionally come to the headquarters for personal contact programmes and other matters.

A couple of years ago the U. G. C. had prepared certain guidelines for these institutes regarding their staffing pattern, the procedure for the preparation of the instructional material, quantum of work of the teachers working there, their administrative infrastructures, etc. Those guidelines were prepared at the time when this system was in its infancy in the country. Obviously, many of these guidelines had been formulated on conjectural basis rather than on experience. After having them put into operation for some time, these guidelines have been found wanting in many respects. These need to be reviewed in the light of the experience gained over the years. All these and other allied issues may be entrusted to the proposed study team.

Another vital area which needs to be carefully looked into is the status of the institutes within the overall structure of the university. In most of the cases, these institutes have been conferred the status of an affiliated or constituent college of the university. This status has not only created problems of relationship between the faculty of the institute and the faculty of the teaching departments of the university, but has also adversely affected the quality of instruction. The teachers of the university departments often behave as big brothers towards the teachers of the institute. As a result, the original expectation of the

U. G. C. and other educationists of the country that these two segments of the university faculty would freely interact with each other, thereby facilitating the emergence of a system, first, of rotation between the two and, later on, of their merger with each other (the ideal being that each teaching department should ultimately develop its own section of correspondence teaching) has been badly frustrated. In addition, it has also resulted in the wastage of human resources. It has been widely observed that both the teaching departments and the institutes recruit specialists in each area and sub-area of various disciplines, even though there is not much work load for them at either of the places. It has also been noticed that if the institute has to get the lessons written by the faculty of the teaching departments, it must pay for the work and, similarly, if the latter needs the services of some specialist from the institute, it must likewise make a payment.

This mal-relationship apart, the institute when equated with the affiliated colleges, generally develops a tendency to look to the latter as a model to be imitated. This type of a measure-stick deviates the institute away from the departments, with the result that the institute emerges as a strange type of an island on the university campus with an altogether different style of functioning. This deviation is particularly resented by the teachers of the institute who wish to be equated with their counterparts in the departments with respect to their status, service conditions and work norms. It also affects the administrative efficiency and academic standards of the institute, for the reason that in the departments the whole thrust of functioning is basically conditioned to teaching and research, whereas in the colleges research activities are totally ignored, and the teaching activity is supplemented by extra-curricular activities. In view of the fact that the students are not physically present in the institute and also in view of the ideal that it should impart a high quality of instruction to its clients, good many of whom may be grown up adults, the institute should be modelled on the lines of the teaching departments and may be accorded, if possible, a status higher than that of the departments. It must be given adequate representation on all decision making bodies of the university.

Sometimes a suggestion is made that the institute, having little in common with either the teaching departments or the colleges, should be elevated and conferred the status of a univer-

sity on the lines of the British Open University. But in a country where unemployment prevails on such a large scale that graduates from conventional type of universities fail to get jobs, those coming out of the 'open university' will most likely be discriminated against in matters of employment. The idea of the open university at this stage appears to be somewhat impractical and highly unproductive. At some later stage when the university degree is delinked from employment and when the idea of having higher education for the sake of learning catches the imagination of the people, then, at that time if correspondence education is independently imparted through a separate university, not much harm would be done.

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National Service Scheme

K. D. Gangrade

The Concept

The introduction of the National Service Scheme in 1969 in the universities is an innovation in higher education aiming at bringing the community and the university closer. The educational system in general is responsible for increasing the deplorable gulf between the educated and the uneducated classes, between the intelligentsia and the masses. The intelligentsia should become a real 'service group' striving to uplift the masses and should not live for itself and perpetuate its own privileged position. The traditional "elite" as a whole—with some noble exceptions—had no close ties with the masses and the new "elite" created by modern education also remained largely aloof from the people, except during the struggle for freedom under Mahatma Gandhi, who was able to inspire a large number of educated and well-to-do persons to identify themselves with the interests of the masses and the country as a whole. But when the struggle for freedom came to an end with the attainment of independence, they again tended to move away from the people. It is, therefore, imperative that a close link is forged between the educational programmes and the needs of the society. The universities and other training institutions of higher learning should identify themselves with the economic and social environment and develop a sense of commitment to the task of meeting the needs of the society.

The Education Commission (1964-66) has rightly said that the destiny of India is now being shaped in her class rooms (Ministry of Education, 1971 : 1-5). This is no mere rhetoric. But the community plays an equally important role in educating and developing its members. Thus the community and universities are interdependent and not mutually exclusive. It is no doubt true that, in a world based on science and technology, it is education that determines the level of prosperity, welfare and

security of the people. On the quality and number of persons coming out of our educational institutions will depend our success in the great enterprise of national reconstruction whose principal aim is to raise the standard of living of the people.

Thus education as an investment in human resource plays an important role in economic growth. It secures relations with the form of skilled manpower geared to the needs of development and also creates proper attitudes and a climate for development. It seeks to create an environment of discipline, harmony, understanding and team work which is conducive to the implementation of development plans. Both for accelerating economic development and for improving the quality of society, it is essential that we should establish a firm and purposeful link between education and development. Development here refers to the process of achieving certain basic qualities for a society essentially to ensure minimum standards of life for all, so that everybody may possess dignity and social status. It would require a standard of material possession which would ensure that no one is prevented from developing his personal potentialities. Education is the general and universal requirement for a child and a society from the time the child is born. The colonial rulers in India according to Mabud Hassan had used education for two broad purposes : One, to create a cultural elite in the country such as could be immune to the pressure of native needs and two, to bring into existence a human resource pool which could be utilised for exploitation of the masses (1973 : 1-11). Consequently, universities in India developed around them an air of insulated exclusiveness. The schism is still very deep and real. The gap between universities and aspirations of the community at large is further widened by the large body of the administrative and teaching personnel who seem to be inextricably tied up with academic practices current in the West. The system of education established by them had remained unchanged even after independence. This system was responsible for the existence of a wide gulf between the educated and uneducated classes, between the intelligentsia and the masses.

To bridge this gap the Education Commission (1964-66) recommended that some form of social and national service should be made obligatory for all students and it should form an integral part of education at all stages. The Commission hoped that this would become an instrument to build character,

improve discipline, inculcate faith in the dignity of manual labour and develop a sense of social responsibility. The scheme intends to provide opportunities to teachers and students to gain valuable experience from such works and to break down the walls that now divide institutions of learning and the common people.

Historical Background

The idea of instituting a scheme of national service for youth had been under consideration since independence. The University Education Commission (1948-49) had originally envisaged the idea of national service by youth, but it favoured a voluntary approach. It regarded conscription applied to social service as a 'contradiction in terms'. In the First Five-Year Plan also, a voluntary approach, on a pilot project basis, was recommended in the first instance. As a result of this suggestion, labour and social service camps were started (Gangrade, 1974 : 33-57).

In 1958, the late Prime Minister Nehru placed the idea of national service by students before the chief ministers. He suggested that all young men and women between the ages of 19 and 22 should be enlisted for civilian service for the nation. In view of the enormous cost and organization involved, he suggested that in the first instance, the scheme should be confined to university students who should work for a certain period in allotted spheres before graduation. A committee was appointed under the chairmanship of C. D. Deshmukh to examine the proposal and make concrete suggestions. This committee recommended that national service for a period of 9 to 12 months may be required of all students completing high school education and intending to enrol themselves in a college or a university.

The scheme was to include some military training, social service, manual labour and general education. It was examined at several levels but was shelved because of its financial implications and difficulties in regard to enforcement. The public reaction to the scheme also had not been favourable due to the compulsory character of the scheme and the addition of one year, that it involved, to the total span of education. The government, however, introduced at the time of national emergency (1962) the scheme of compulsory National Cadet Corps (NCC), at the university stage.

In 1960, at the instance of the Government of India, Prof. K. G. Saiyidain studied national service in several countries including Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Germany, Norway, Sweden, England, the United States of America, Japan, and the Philippines. The report of the study has been published under the title "National Service for Youth". This report made a number of recommendations as to what could be done in India to develop a practicable scheme. It did not favour compulsion. In fact this (compulsion) had not been favoured in any of these countries. It recommended that the national or social service should be introduced on a voluntary basis and extended as widely as possible and that it should provide a rich and varied experience through a variety of programmes and activities.

The recommendation of the Deshmukh Committee to add one year of national service for all young persons passing out of higher secondary schools or pre-university course before entering employment or the university was not received with favour in any quarter. Instead of adding one year to the total span of education for the purpose, a more flexible plan that envisaged the development of national service as an integral part of education was suggested. *Such a programme would run concurrently with the academic studies in schools and colleges. It was felt that the programme should start from the upper primary stage and continue up to the university so that proper attitudes were developed from an early age and every young person was ultimately brought within its orbit.*

In the light of the recommendations of the Education Commission (1964-66) the problem of providing opportunities for involvement of students in community work was considered at various levels and eventually the Union Ministry of Education decided to launch the NSS during 1969-70. Originally, the scheme was intended to be an alternative to the NCC or the NSO (National Sports Organization). It was expected that everybody studying in the first two years of the degree course would choose either the NCC or the NSS, an exemption being given only to outstanding sportsmen for whom special facilities for coaching were to be provided under the NSO. Both NCC and NSS were, however, to be voluntary for girls. But, owing to the constraint of resources, the scheme had to be started on a voluntary-cum-selective basis.

Goal of the Scheme

The ultimate goal of the NSS is education through community service and the student's self development. The basic purpose is to enrich the student's personality and deepen his understanding of the social environment in which he lives. It should help students to develop an awareness of social reality, to have a concern for the well-being of the community, to undertake appropriate activities designed to tackle social problems and promote welfare in the interest of the total development of the society.

The more specific objectives of the scheme are to arouse student's social conscience and to provide him with the opportunity : (i) to work with and among people, (ii) to engage in creative and instructive social action, (iii) to enhance his knowledge of himself and the community through a confrontation with reality, (iv) to put his scholarship to practical use in mitigating at least some of the social problems, (v) to gain skills in the exercise of democratic leadership, and (vi) to gain skills to enable him to get self-employed.

In considering the goals and objectives of the scheme a major question that continues to baffle us relates to the emphasis and orientation of the service programme. Do we see the scheme as primarily providing opportunities for growth and constructive work to the students or do we look upon it as a means of mobilizing students for meeting community needs ? We should be clear about the service and educational goals of this programme as these two types of emphasis must be kept in mind in planning service activities by students. It is true that students cannot be considered as merely instruments for meeting community needs. Yet, it is community needs and the effort to meet them that give some relevance to the student activity. To the extent we take community needs into account we have to provide students special skills to render the type of service most needed by the community. We may have to organize 'capsule' type of short-term courses to equip them with skills to be useful to the community. At the same time, over-emphasis on the service to the community by students can be self-defeating. It may result in false criteria for judging the usefulness of student service programmes. In part, at least, this usefulness would lie in what student himself gains out of his effort to be of service to the community. From this point of view it is essential to select carefully the tasks that

are assigned to student groups. The tasks must have the potentiality of enabling a student to benefit by the new skills he has acquired and to derive satisfaction from the achievement of clear though limited, goals and from the experience of working with others on projects useful to the society.

Coverage and Organization

The scheme was introduced on a pilot basis in 37 universities and three other institutions of higher learning with an involvement of about 40,000 students. Over the last ten years its coverage has increased manifold. There are now about 2500 units having an estimated enrolment of about 4.5 lakh students. The target of the scheme is to cover ten per cent of the total number of undergraduate student population of the country.

The organizational and administrative structure created for the implementation of the National Service Scheme is flexible enough to allow initiative, new ideas and experiments to flow from the students and the teaching community. At the national level there is a Central Advisory Committee consisting of educationists and administrators from the field of education. This committee reviews the programmes and the functioning of the scheme from time to time and suggests ways for their improvement. The committee also advises the government on matters of policy in regard to the NSS

Most of the state governments have set up State Advisory Committees for the NSS under the chairmanships of Vice-Chancellors. These committees generally consist of some principals of the constituent or affiliated colleges, deans, teachers in charge of the NSS, representatives of the local administration (district collectors or the municipal commissioners as the case may be) and the representatives of the Schools of Social Work or other training institutions responsible for orientation and training. These committees are expected to provide leadership in giving proper direction to the NSS programme and provide necessary supervision. The colleges implementing the NSS are also expected to set up their Advisory Committees in order to secure participation of maximum number of teachers and to organize programmes in a planned manner. Most of the colleges, however, have not constituted Advisory Committees and programmes are planned and implemented by the teachers in charge

in consultation with the Principals and sometimes in cooperation with other colleagues.

The National Service Scheme is sponsored by the Government of India. State governments contribute their share to the cost of organizing various programmes on a per capita basis. The ratio of the financial share between the Central and State governments is 7:5. The quantum of grant available for the NSS programme (per student per year) has changed from time to time.

Programmes

Before the National Service Scheme was introduced, only a few colleges, especially those run by Christian missionaries, had some tradition of involving students in social service activities. Finding placements for the NSS students was initially a major problem, experienced by many colleges which started implementing the NSS. Campus beautification, conducting literacy classes; working in welfare organizations and hospitals, helping the authorities in traffic control, and conducting cleanliness drives in slum areas were some of the programmes undertaken by the students in the initial stage of the scheme's operation. These programmes were largely undertaken in urban areas. Soon, however, the National Service Scheme found itself engaged in tackling problems of national significance. Under the scheme the students — both men and women — rendered significant assistance in tackling the problems arising out of the mass influx of evacuees from the erstwhile East Pakistan in 1971. Thousands of NSS volunteers from different parts of the country went to work in transit camps and rendered help to evacuees in registration, mass vaccination, distribution, of ration, clothes and medicine, pitching and dismantling tents, running of kitchen, and the disposal of garbage. The potentials and possibilities of NSS students were thus discovered. After the widespread famine of 1972-73 a special campaign known as "Youth Against Famine" was launched under the NSS to involve students in the task of mitigating the sufferings of famine-stricken people. Seven hundred and fortyfive camps of varying durations ranging from 10 days to over a month were held across the country. Sixtythree thousand young men and women (including 18,000 non-student youth) participated in this programme. They sank or deepened wells and tanks, repaired or constructed roads, and worked on a number of minor irrigation projects (Gangrade, 1977: 1-20).

The response of student and non-student youth to the "Youth Against Famine" campaign was so overwhelming that the Ministry of Education and Social Welfare decided to make the special camping programme a regular feature of the National Service Scheme. The special camping programme continued in the subsequent years with the theme of "Youth Against Dirt and Diseases" and "Youth for Afforestation and Tree Plantation" (Gangrade, 1973).

From the year 1976-77, the call to the youth has been to engage themselves in the task of "Rural Reconstruction". Approximately 2500 camps of 10 days' duration have been held between April, 1976 and January, 1977 (Gangrade, 1978). Thus, a new dimension has been added to the National Service Scheme, of involving students in works of national importance and significance.

Adoption of Villages

It is suggested that each college should adopt a village or a group of villages or an urban slum. These villages should serve as laboratories for the NSS work. The student volunteers can have concurrent work as well as camp programmes in these villages and slums. This would help in maintaining continuous link between the village and the college. The aim should be total development of the village with the collaboration and co-operation of the concerned development departments. At the moment there are nearly 2,500 villages adopted by various colleges and universities under the NSS all over the country. The colleges concerned hold their special camps in these villages and also hold week-end camps or make regular visits to these villages during the term-time in order to carry on the activities through most part of the year. The adoption of villages is thus a means to a wider goal of helping students to engage themselves in the activities of rural reconstruction.

The programmes under the National Service Scheme are broadly divided into two major categories: (i) concurrent programme, which includes activities being carried out by the NSS students concurrently in their spare time while they are attending their classes; and (ii) camping programmes-activities, undertaken by students in camps during vacations. However, there cannot be any watertight division between the two. Since the colleges have adopted villages, a programme initiated during a camp could be continued throughout the year during week-

ends and on other holidays utilizing the regular hours of work assigned to the NSS students.

Camping has now become an integral part of the National Service Scheme. Besides being a very effective means to involve students in the developmental activities, camping by itself is a process which enriches students' knowledge and deepens their understanding of the rural life. It also provides students an opportunity in group living thus contributing to the character building of our younger generation. It facilitates healthy interaction between students and the non-student youth revitalizing thereby the whole process of community development.

National Adult Education Programme

With the launching of the National Adult Education Programme (NAEP) on October 2, 1978, a new dimension has been added to the NSS programmes in the community. The National Adult Education Programme aims at more than imparting lessons in an academic fashion. The participants (adults) have to relate the newly gained knowledge to their requirements of the occupations. In some cases they may even start learning with their problems and needs as the frames of references. The programme has three facets : literacy, functionality and awareness. These facets are different phases of one single effort — that of raising and rousing the consciousness of the poverty ridden people. We have learnt from our past experience with programmes for eradicating illiteracy that literacy learning by itself bores the poor because it does not at all mitigate their poverty and inequality. So too, learning occupational ethics by itself does not lead to change in their poverty status because they do not have the capital and market outlets to use these skills and again such routine occupations like sewing for women and basket making for men bore them as they leave them where they are. It is when the programme to eradicate illiteracy organizes people for their rights and for a fight against all forms of exploitation that they are subjected to, that literacy learning and skills formation becomes an integral and meaningful part of the total effort for eradicating illiteracy. That is what the adult education programme which was launched on Gandhi Jayanti Day, 1978 embodies.

The involvement of universities in such a mass movement has been considered desirable and essential. The natural corollary of this policy is that the NSS which has been working with

people should provide necessary lead and guidance. At the outset it is essential to understand that the NSS and the NAEP are complementary to each other. Under the aegis of the NSS, the student volunteers have been organising a number of activities aimed at the socio-economic development of the people and for bringing about social change. In effect, the NAEP will also attempt to achieve similar objectives. Many colleges had taken up adult education as one of the activities of the NSS during previous years. The NSS can support and strengthen the NAEP and *vice-versa*. A number of NSS students may be involved in looking after various aspects of the NAEP. A group of three students per centre may undertake actual conduct of the literary classes; some volunteers may be engaged in certain promotional activities, while a few students can contact agencies and subject-specialists for organising lectures and demonstrations at the centres. It is envisaged that the number of students participating in the NAEP should go on increasing every year.

Today almost all the NSS units are actively participating in the NAEP and some of the training institutions have been given the responsibilities of orienting teachers and students for this purpose. The experience so far gained is positive. Both the leaders and the students have been able to enlist active participation of non-NSS volunteers and other teachers in this movement. Some universities are playing an effective role in strengthening this programme by helping and supporting the voluntary organizations in their endeavour to reach the neglected and weaker section of the society.

As per the University Grants Commission's guidelines any college can take up 10 (or multiples of 10) NAEP centres (30 learners in a centre). Each centre will get Rs. 1,400 for a course of 200 periods, each of 90 minutes duration. The classes will be conducted by two student-teachers who will be paid Rs. 200 for the entire session. Dedicated and sustained work is called for on the part of the student-teachers as well as the NAEP coordinator. Motivation of student-teachers is no doubt a difficult problem. The monetary incentive is not there because the out-of-pocket allowance of Rs. 200 a student gets is practically spent on bus fares. Since sustained work of 200 days (8-10 months) is required to be put in by the students, they must have certain qualities—willingness to take responsibilities, integrity, commitment to the cause, regularity and initiative. The UGC guidelines

do not make it obligatory for any college, teacher or student to take up the programme. It lays emphasis on voluntary spirit. But the UGC is clear that adult education and extension work should be integrated with teaching and research. It is hoped that the students and teachers will accept the challenge and repay the debt, they owe to the society by taking the responsibility of adult education programme (Adiseshiah, 1979 : 28-32).

Achievements

On account of the NSS efforts durable community assets have been created by students through their initiative and through people's participation. A number of small link roads have been constructed or repaired to end the isolation of many far flung villages from the rest of the country. A number of wells have been sunk, deepened, repaired or cleaned. This has helped in assuring regular supply of water both for drinking and irrigation purposes. The NSS students have helped the neo-farmers to reclaim the waste land allotted to them. Small and marginal farmers in Adivasi and other backward areas have been helped in getting credit facilities from banks and other financial institutions. The hold of the money lenders has been loosened in quite a few backward Adivasi areas thanks to the efforts of the NSS students. Improved methods of cultivation have been introduced. The Harijans have been helped in the construction of their houses. Medical assistance has been provided in far away villages. Thousands of trees have been planted and a number of people have been helped to learn the three R's.

There are intangible gains also, especially to the village communities where the NSS students live for 10 days in camps and engage themselves in activities which invariably involve manual labour. When the students work, for instance, on construction of the village school, the rest of the village community, especially the village youth can hardly afford to remain aloof. The village youth invariably join the NSS students in their work projects. Even the elder members of the community participate. This helps in bringing about certain attitudinal changes in the village community, and awareness among the people about their own welfare needs which they can themselves meet.

The very fact that thousands of young boys and girls from the cities go to villages and stay there and share the difficulties of the village population creates a very healthy impact on the

minds of the local community and the young volunteers. It helps in removing the barrier that exists between the rural community and the educated youth.

Gains to the Students

When students engage themselves in various projects in rural areas they become sensitive towards the life situation obtaining in our villages. This is perhaps the greatest achievement of the NSS. The participation of students and teachers in rural projects has brought about an appreciable improvement in teaching and learning, as both teachers and students have been able to acquaint themselves with the social reality from close quarters. For example, teachers and students of economics might have read a lot on the subject of poverty, but not many had seen or experienced, as to how poverty inflicts the poor, diminishes his productivity, lowers his ambitions, and paralyses him socially and economically with such severity that he ceases to be a participant in the process of planned development. This confrontation with the realities of life enhances the student's knowledge and deepens his understanding of the class-room subjects and thus provides a corrective to the predominantly text-book oriented education. The teachers and students of medical colleges by participating in camps in villages and working with the slum dwellers have realised that their place lies in the community and not solely in hospitals. This apart, the students gain rich experience in democratic leadership, planning, management and working with people at all levels.

Attitudinal Changes

Attitudinal changes both among the participants and members of the local community are remarkable indeed and should be seen to be believed. It will, therefore, not be amiss to cite some instances of these changes. A Rajput headman of the village who had considered use of spade by him as unworthy of his caste and had not offered water to volunteers on the first day inaugurated the construction of a well by striking the spade twenty five times instead of five and bade farewell to volunteers on the last day with drums and bugles in a procession. The entire village looked gay on that occasion. In the same village a girl who was ailing with ear-ache was feared to be haunted by evil spirits and inter-dining of the caste group with this family had stopped for this reason. The caste leaders desired a community feast for

driving out the devil by using the good offices of a pundit. Volunteers persuaded the attending priest to perform the ceremony by accepting a token sum of Rs. 1.25 and a coconut which was offered to him on behalf of the camp. The outcaste family was accepted by the group after this event, and the caste leaders were persuaded to allow the girl to be treated by a doctor as well.

In another instance the slum dwellers refused to give their spades to the volunteers to clean the "*ganda nalla*" as it would pollute their spades. They preferred to live in the dirty surrounding rather than join the volunteers and give their implements to them for use. But the persistent efforts of the volunteers brought them "in" not only with their spades but with all the members of their families to clean their surroundings and maintain them clean in future also.

Just as there were changes in the attitudes of the community, volunteers also experienced attitudinal changes. When some of the campers learnt that a Harijan boy had been employed to fetch water and wash utensils, they became so agitated that the boy had to be dismissed. The matter was discussed for a couple of days in the camp and eventually the same Harijan boy was hired for the remaining period of the camp to fetch water for the campers. In one camp it was a rule that left-over food will not be wasted; it would rather be consumed either at the time of the next meal or breakfast. One girl who was not accustomed to eating stale food complained about it and when she was told that people belonging to "exterior" castes ate food which they collected by sieving cow-dung during the harvest season, it sounded to her like a fairy tale. She never complained about food thereafter. Other volunteers who came from well-to-do families felt guilty that they were leading a comfortable life only at the expense of their not so lucky brethren. Some of the medical students realised about the enormity of rural health problems and their role in tackling them. The local administration became aware for the first time that the student power could be used for constructive work. The impact of this special project was manifold and this abundantly answers the question posed by critics of the scheme that hired labour would have done the job more economically and in less time. Apparently such a reasoning sounds plausible but closer examination of it leads to its outright rejection because attitudinal changes among hired

labourers would not have occurred at all, let alone changes in the attitudes of the local community through their work. Instances quoted above show that work on projects was not a one-way traffic and when volunteers built roads, to give an example, roads "built" their lives and also the lives of the members of the local community. Students learnt beyond doubt that financial resources alone cannot build projects. They realised very soon that completion of a project requires public education, consensus, organisational efforts and cooperative action and that social service camps provided opportunities to attend to these equally important aspects and thus serve as media for the effective utilization of the scarce financial resource for the benefit of the community.

Prospects

The period primarily prescribed for service for a National Service volunteer is 120 hours per year. Since the volunteers enrol themselves normally for two years, the time quota works out to 240 hours (Hassan, 1973). The entire NSS is strictly voluntary, although methods of involving the total student mass and all the universities along with their resources in community action programme have been continually examined. Two schools of thought have contended against each other. The first, for which stability and discipline were prime consideration, held that the NSS should be purely voluntary and selective, and enrolment should remain confined to graduate students. The other school would like to think of the NSS as a lever for changing the character of the universities, and use educational institutions as instruments of social transformation. This school placed emphasis on regarding the NSS as a movement rather than as aggregating students for some ad hoc common cause. This may call for universalization of the NSS and making it compulsory. This approach will widen the present scope of the NSS and would involve all the university teachers, in fact the whole university system. The curriculum and teaching will have to be reoriented to meet the new challenge by opening the walls of the university and involving the community in the total educational process of students.

If the primary objective of the National Service Scheme; that is, education through community, has to be achieved it cannot be allowed to continue as an alternative to the NCC or the NSO indefinitely. It will be compulsory in the sense that all

the students and teachers at the undergraduate and even at the post-graduate levels will be required to participate in the programme of national development simultaneously with the pursuit of their studies in colleges and universities. Such a participation will offer them opportunities to apply and test their knowledge through collaboration with other disciplines.

In fact a part of the course work will be completed through projects in community settings. It will be voluntary only in the sense that the selection of subject groups or optional subjects will be made by students themselves. Since each subject teacher will spend a portion of his teaching time in the community on service projects, a variety of programmes will be developed on inter-disciplinary basis which may be of some interest to students and teachers and which may provide work experience to them. Whether the NSS gets universalized in the colleges, or it remains in the form of an optional subject, there may not arise a need to allocate huge funds or resources to implement it. Teachers may be required to devote, say, one fourth or one fifth of their teaching time on such projects, and community work therefore may be regarded as part of their duty. This implies that project work would be provided for in the college time table. The teacher will be expected to report at the work project along with his students for a stipulated period during a particular fortnight or month. Students may similarly attend to project work instead of attending classes and the method of evaluation may be so designed as to assess project work as an integral part of the whole teaching process. The result of this step will lead to basic modification of study assignments, that is, classroom-education, supplemented by laboratory experiences, will have to go hand-in-hand with field activity. In order to put more teeth in the NSS and to make it a prestigious programme, efforts have to be made to integrate it with the curriculum.

Integration of NSS with Curriculum

Efforts to modify curriculum so far have been "subject" oriented and have resulted in thinking in terms of what should be included or excluded from a subject or planning in terms of co-curricular or extra-curricular activities to strengthen a subject or to supplement it. The second stage in this process has been to correlate subjects. The third one has been to have "broad subjects" for a course and the fourth one is to have "broad fields" as a course. The fifth stage, that is more meaningful,

would be to use the "problem" as a basis for inter-relating knowledge. This would require : (i) organization of experiences which could be common to all students and also specific in nature to students of special interest; (ii) planning of course content to be taught through an inter-disciplinary approach, taught by a single person or a number of persons from various disciplines covering the topic or problem from various angles (Hassan, 1973).

The problem of integration has been discussed at various seminars and workshops. But no concrete step has been taken by any university in this direction. The UGC has set up subject panels to examine the possibility of integrating national service with the university curricula. The panel meetings have not so far been able to bring up any concrete proposal in this direction. Some universities have solved the problem of integration by introducing an additional optional paper on the subject or making community service compulsory. This is not integration. The academicians have not accepted this challenge, as most of them still want to remain confined to the portals of the university or the college. Amongst the advocates of change, there are many who are still not very clear about how the curriculum dimension of national service is to be developed. They would like specific illustrations to be worked out in respect of each discipline and some pilot experience before they fully get over to their doubts. It is not possible here to take each university discipline, one by one, and articulate detailed curricular specifications.

Need for Recognition and Incentives

At present the social service work does not occupy a place of pride in the academic world (Singh, 1979 : 1-14). The teachers and students who are engaged in the work are laughed at. This work of teachers is often considered to be inferior to the work of those who are engaged in purely academic pursuits. Some believe that students who have opted for social service are backward in studies. This is not true as profiles of some of the student volunteers indicate. A good number of bright students are represented in the scheme. However, the data on programme officers and volunteers taken from various evaluation reports suggest that a majority of them are from the faculties of social sciences and humanities.

It is essential that the separation between the intellectual work and social service work should disappear. Both are import-

ant and complementary to each other. In order to make the scheme prestigious efforts should be made to give due recognition to the students and the teachers who are engaged in this work. Some of them see the recognition of their work in the appreciation that they get from the community and the agency of their placement. Some others derive satisfaction for being useful to their fellow-brethren. It is difficult to say that all teachers and students have joined the scheme to serve the people with no regard for rewards.

A study on the incentives to the NSS volunteers conducted by the Delhi School of Social Work indicates that award of work experience certificate is very common (Delhi School of Social Work, 1979 : 40-46). Forty-eight out of the 56 universities, which responded, award work experience certificates to NSS students completing 120 hours of work. Six universities have devised methods of giving weightage in terms of additional marks to NSS students seeking admission to higher classes. The Kumaon University, Nainital, gives 10 additional marks to a student who has attended one NSS camp and is seeking admission to a higher degree class. A student who attends more than one camp gets 30 marks for admission to the B. Ed. class. The University of Kerala and the University of Calicut offer 10 additional marks to the NSS certificate holders, while considering their admission to higher degree classes. The Kurukshetra University gives 10 per cent weightage for each year of NSS work to students seeking admission to the colleges of education. It also gives 5 per cent weightage to the students holding NSS merit certificates given to exceptionally good NSS volunteers. The Kerala Agricultural University, Trichur gives 5 additional marks to the NSS students who have occupied leadership positions in the NSS and 3 marks to all other NSS students who have attended NSS special camps. The Marathwada University, Aurangabad gives 5 per cent additional marks to a student who fails in one subject to enable him/her to obtain minimum marks required to pass, provided he/she has completed 120 hours of work under the NSS. Similarly, an NSS student who fails to secure minimum aggregate marks receives 2 per cent additional marks if he/she has completed 120 hours of NSS work. The University of Bombay has introduced 10 marks for 120 hours of work. There are only three universities which give some condonation in attendance. The University of Jodhpur and the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University condones

the absence from the regular class for the number of days the students have devoted to the NSS work. The Balwant Vidyapeeth Rural Institute, Bichpuri, Agra allows up to 5 per cent of the absence to be condoned in lieu of the students' participation in NSS camps.

These incentives have led in some places to a spurt of applications to join NSS and scramble for placements. For example, in Bombay University a unit which is expected to enrol 100 students gets application from 400 to 500 candidates. It is extremely difficult to adopt a selective approach as all of them show keen interest in the scheme and bring pressure to remain in it. They even reach welfare institutions and demand work. This has created a problem for welfare institutions and programme officers, as they are not able to either provide necessary work or supervise the students. This enthusiasm can be contained only by involving all the teachers in the scheme. If all or most of the teachers are involved, it will provide a viable teacher-student ratio, where a teacher will have a small number of students to organize programmes for them and supervise their activities. Failing that, it will be extremely difficult to maintain the quality of work done by the large number of volunteers rushing for NSS work in view of the additional advantage they get from it.

The recognition of work of teachers engaged in this task should not end with lip sympathy. If possible, promotion should come forth on the basis of applied community oriented work. This does not mean that there should be no incentives for theoretical research. The emphasis must shift in the direction of socially committed extension work.

The programme officers engaged in NSS work are given orientation and refresher courses to develop in them a certain amount of expertise to plan the programme, guide the students and work among the people. It is, therefore, necessary that the teachers assigned with the NSS work are not frequently changed and at least a term of three years is maintained. It takes a good deal of time for a teacher to establish contacts with the people and the agencies to arrange programmes, and therefore, it will be most damaging to have frequent changes in leadership.

The programme expertise for the scheme has come from several departments of government and voluntary organizations. An active effort has to be made to get the cooperation and coordination of all the government and non-government agencies

in this task. The present situation is not very happy. The government departments have not yet realised the importance of having the participation of university through its teachers and students in development work. The government must galvanize its machinery to involve a large volunteer force available in building the nation (Gangrade, 1974).

Conclusion

Despite the universities having a disturbed calendar of work, in a large number of universities the NSS work has not suffered. This speaks volumes about the morale of students and teachers who will not like to withdraw from community work even when they are fighting with the authorities for their so-called just causes.

The special camping programme has come to stay and has been widely appreciated. But this is not true of regular programmes. A large number of colleges are defaulters in this account. Universities, and colleges will have to make an additional effort in collaboration with the government and other agencies to find regular work opportunities for the student volunteers. A committee headed by the district collector will be able to suggest some concrete projects in which students can participate. It will also ensure the coordination of work and resources.

The National Service Scheme has moved from an ad hoc programme to a movement. But the students and teachers have to keep a constant watch so that the programme does not get routinized and fall into the hands of bureaucrats. The flexibility and innovation built in the scheme must be maintained and continued. It should not be allowed to die down in the anxiety to have uniformity and same patterns of rules all over the country. The teachers and students should be given due recognition for community work. It should receive the same prestige and status as research or other publication work. The teachers of the NSS may be given some special facilities or fellowship to take a year or two off from their regular work to write their work experience. This may provide the much needed indigenous material based on first hand knowledge and actual field work experience. There should be, as far as possible, perfect cooperation and coordination developed between educational institutions, voluntary organizations and government departments. This is needed to maintain and continue the work student volunteers

have taken up either as a part of their concurrent work or block work.

Pursuit of knowledge presupposes a certain detachment from the din of the society to which educational institutions have to be made proof. This seclusion, however, cannot be of an extreme degree, as beyond a point it renders the educational system irrelevant to, what in the ultimate analysis is, its beneficiary — the society itself. Over the decades before independence, the Indian educational system became increasingly irrelevant to the society because of such unwholesome seclusion. For this reason, even during the era of struggle for freedom Gandhi stressed the need for radical reforms in the educational system, 'basic education' being a measure he suggested for this purpose. Independent India did not go the whole hog with the Gandhian recommendations regarding education, as in much else. But several studies done on behalf of the government from time to time accepted the essence of the Gandhian ideas by suggesting some form of social service as a part of education. The National Service Scheme can claim that in the past ten years it has made some modest effort in influencing the educational system to make it more community and people oriented rather than allow it to be confined to the four walls of educational institutions.

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Internal Assessment

Jacob Aikara

Examination and its Objectives

Assessment in the educational system refers to what is generally known as examination. Examination is an integral part of education. It has been existent ever since the institution of education. In the ultimate analysis examination evaluates the level of learning achieved by the learner which in turn is a feedback for the teacher. Thus, in the process of education, teaching, learning and examination form one integral unit.

Examination means evaluation of the outcome of the educational process carried out by the educational system. Examination, in so far as it is evaluation, involves certain measures or instruments of evaluation. Any measure has two essential characteristics : validity and reliability. When we speak of the validity of a measuring instrument, we mean that the instrument measures what it is intended to measure. For example, if a thermometre measures weight instead of temperature, it is not a valid measuring instrument. Reliability refers to the accuracy with which an instrument measures something. For example, if an instrument measures sometimes weight and some other times temperature, it is not reliable. A measure can be reliable without being valid. For example, if an instrument intended to measure temperature consistently measures weight, it is reliable but not valid.

What is the purpose of examination in the educational system ? What is it intended to measure ? It is intended to measure the outcomes of learning. The following are important among them : knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, evaluation, drawing/sketching skills, ability to handle instrument, communication skills, social skills (as team work and leadership), personal virtues/skills (as regularity, hard work, originality, initiative), scientific attitude, creativity (Association of Indian Universities, 1977 : 10). The number of items, which are to be measured and on which emphasis is given in examina-

tion, may depend upon the level and type of education. For example, at lower levels of education emphasis may be on augmentation of knowledge and comprehension. At a higher level, where the objectives of education are complex, the contents of examination are more varied.

Internal Assessment

Internal assessment is a form of evaluation or examination in the educational system. Its specific characteristics may be understood better in relation to what is called external examination. External examination has been the pattern in our educational system at the higher levels. The essential characteristic of the external examination is that it takes place at the end of the year (and sometimes at the end of the semester) of learning and that this 'final' evaluation is done by someone who is 'external' to the learner, i. e. the examiner is not the learner's own teacher. This system of examination has been prevalent in our educational system especially at the higher levels. This system came to stay because of certain advantages it has had in dealing with large numbers of learners. The system was considered to ensure uniformity in evaluation, anonymity of the learners (so that the learner gets neither the advantage of being known to the examiner nor the disadvantage of being penalized for something unacceptable to the examiner in the learner's person, caste, community and such factors) and administrative efficiency to handle large numbers of examinees. On account of these advantages external examination came to stay as the most acceptable form of examination in the system of higher education in India.

In contrast with external examination, internal assessment refers to examination of the learner by the learner's own teacher. Secondly, it is continuous and goes along with teaching and learning, so that it is not reduced to an event that takes place at the end of the year or semester. Internal assessment as such is not anything new and strictly it is not an innovation in the educational process. In fact, historically external examination has been an innovation in education. But as far as higher education in India after the independence is concerned, one could not but consider internal assessment in higher education as an innovation. By the time we got independence external examination had become so widespread and established in the system of higher education that one considered external examination as the only feasible and efficient form of examination in higher education.

Historical Background

Ever since independence educationists and academicians have expressed concern over the state of the existing system of external examination. The Radhakrishnan Commission in 1947 said that if one were "to suggest any single reform in university education, it should be that of examination". The University Grants Commission (U. G. C.) time and again voiced the need for improving the examination system in higher education. The commission appointed various committees and organized seminars for this purpose. The U. G. C. Committee on Examination Reforms, 1957 noted the need "to put the examination in its proper perspective as something which contributes to the total purpose of education. It must not be regarded as an end in itself and allowed to dominate the whole educational system. It is, therefore, necessary to re-state the educational objectives underlying examination". (U. G. C., 1962 : 40). Among the seminars organized by the U. G. C. for the purpose of examination reform those held under the leadership of Dr. Benjamin S. Bloom in 1958 are significant (U. G. C., 1961). The U. G. C. Committee on Standards of University Education appointed in 1961 also expressed the need to improve examination and said that "the reform of examinations has become a matter of great urgency in our universities" (U. G. C., 1965 : 77). In 1971 the Inter-University Board organized a seminar on examinations. The participants of the seminar were unanimous in expressing the need to reform the system of external examination at the university level (Inter-University Board of India and Ceylon, 1971).

Based on the reports and recommendations of the committees and seminars, the U. G. C. brought out a brochure in 1973 (U. G. C., 1973) which recommended the introduction of internal assessment as a step to improve the system of examination in university education. In the following year the U. G. C. conducted four zonal workshops (at Madurai, Ahmedabad, Chandigarh, and Bhubaneswar) to discuss internal assessment, as recommended by the U. G. C. brochure of 1973. Subsequently internal assessment has been introduced in many universities as a new form of evaluation.

Deficiencies of External Examination

Why has internal assessment been recommended? As already mentioned, the existing external examination was found to have a number of drawbacks and internal assessment is consi-

dered to succeed where external examination has failed. What was wrong with the system of external examination? First of all, external examination meant the separation between teaching and learning, on the one hand and examination, on the other. Teaching, learning and examination should form one integral unit. But in the external examination teaching as the task of the teacher is separated from examination considered to be the task of the student and the board of examination. The teacher, the learner and the examiner get alienated from one another. The only link that exists between teaching and examining is the uniform syllabus. This is reducing teaching and examining to mere mechanical processes. As the student is evaluated totally on the basis of his performance at the examination that takes place at the end of the year or course, he is concerned only with this event at the end and tends to be little serious about day-to-day learning.

External examination at the end by somebody other than the teacher suffers from another drawback. It fails to perform the function of evaluation that is important for the teacher, viz. feed-back to teachers. Thus, both in terms of the very nature of examination as an integral part of teaching-learning and in terms of its function of providing feed-back to teachers and offering students periodical review of learning, external examination has serious deficiencies.

Another defect of external examination is its emphasis on memorization at the cost of real study and intellectual development. This was noted by the U. G. C. Committee on Standards of University Education as a serious deficiency of external examination (U. G. C., 1965 : 80). Since the emphasis in external examination tends to be on reproduction of facts and figures, there is very little scope for assimilation of what is learned. Evaluation of memory in itself is not altogether outside the scope of examination. But one cannot think of examination at the level of higher education evaluating largely or exclusively memorization.

At times the "chance" factor in external examination altogether distorts evaluation. For example, a student irrespective of how much he has assimilated during the course of learning may fare very well or very badly in the final examination depending on the fact of his being lucky to get or unlucky not to get questions of which the answers have been memorized by him.

What is implied here is selective study on the part of the student. Selective study here is possible because the single point external examination seldom covers the whole course. As a consequence of selective study and cramming, real learning is missed contributing to fall in the standard of university education. Such memory oriented system of examination at the university level, on the one hand turns out to be an invalid instrument of evaluation as it does not measure all that it should, and on the other hand is likely to defeat the very purpose of education in so far as it tends to hinder the process of assimilative learning. These are the academic reasons that caused anxiety over the system of external examination.

Besides suffering from certain academic deficiencies, external examination has certain operational or administrative problems. One of the major problems faced by the universities and colleges is the use of "unfair" means in examination by students, viz, copying. There have been instances of mass copying in external examination. At times invigilators have been threatened by students and examinations have been conducted under police protection. One of the administrative problems in external examination has been the leakage of question papers. In case of leakage of question papers being detected, examinations are postponed or even repeated causing anxiety and hardships to students. This results in the late publication of results which creates further problems for students. The U. G. C. Committee on Examination Reform has rightly observed : "The (examination) department has to operate with speed, efficiency and secrecy. It is doubtful whether the examination departments in many universities can claim to possess all these virtues. The administration of examinations seems to involve an enormous wastage of time, resulting in late publication of results and consequent difficulties students have to face in regard to obtaining admission to courses in other universities in India or abroad. Sometimes a whole year is lost because of this." (U. G. C., 1962 : 37). Hardly any university in India is free from this administrative problem in external examination. Thus it has been recognized that external examination is deficient, as far as the objectives of evaluation are concerned, and beset with serious problems, as far as the operation of the system is concerned.

Strengths of Internal Assessment

Internal assessment is proposed to make up for the deficiencies of the external system and to free the universities and colleges from the administrative problems connected with the system of external examination. The two important features of internal assessment are that it is evaluation of a student by his own teacher, and that it is continuous. These two features make evaluation integrated with teaching and learning. Just as teaching-learning is an interactional process between the teacher and the student, examination too becomes an interactional process between the student and the teacher. Being periodical, internal assessment, on the one hand, reveals to the student periodically his own progress in studies and, on the other hand, enables the teacher to have regular feed-back and to know the progress of the student in studies.

Secondly, in internal assessment there is much scope for using various methods of evaluation. As various methods can be used, what is not evaluated by one method can be assessed by another. In other words, memorization does not dominate the examination process. Thus internal assessment serves the academic objectives of evaluation much better than external examination.

The operational and administrative advantages of internal assessment are that it is free from many of the problems associated with external examination as copying and leakage of question papers. In methods of evaluation that do not employ paper-pencil test based on secret questions, leakage of question papers is irrelevant and copying becomes insignificant. As the teacher evaluates his own student using various methods, there is hardly any administrative or bureaucratic problems involved here. On the contrary, the university confining its role to broad supervision over internal assessment can elsewhere utilize its administrative resources that would have been spent in conducting external examination.

Methods

In internal assessment, in contrast to external examination, it is possible to evaluate a number of learning outcomes and to use various tools of evaluation. The external examination uses essay type questions as its main tool and thus its scope is limited as far as evaluation of learning outcomes are concerned. A number of methods are recommended by the Association of

Indian Universities as tools of internal assessment (1977). They include quiz, written test, assignment, practical, guided project, group discussion, checklist and rating scale. Quizzes may be announced or unannounced. Written tests may consist of objective type tests, short answer essay type tests, long answer essay type tests or problem-solving type tests. Assignments are given to enable students to get sufficient practice in problem-solving skills. Assignments may be done in class, in the library or at home. Practicals include laboratory experiments and field work. Guided projects which may be done individually or in groups, are meant to develop in the students abilities of analysis, synthesis, evaluation, creativity and decision-making. Checklists and rating scales are meant to evaluate some of the personality traits, such as hard work, creativity, scientific attitude, etc. The teacher (or the university or college) chooses the methods for internal assessment for the particular course and gives them appropriate weightage in the total evaluation scheme.

Problems in Internal Assessment

Although internal assessment, compared to external examination, has a number of advantages and makes up for some of the shortcomings of the latter, it is not without problems. An important problem is regarding the choice of methods of evaluation. It is not feasible to use all the possible methods for evaluating one and the same student and all the methods cannot be given equal weightage. The teacher (or the university/college) has the difficult task of deciding on the components of internal assessment (i. e. what methods to be selected and to what extent to be used) and the weightage to be given to each component. Methods to be chosen and weightage to be given may vary with disciplines, with levels of education and with teacher-student ratio. Thus, decision on the components of methods and on the weightage to each component is problematic.

Secondly, internal assessment is more demanding than external examination. Since the assessment is continuous, both the student and the teacher have to be busy throughout the course of the study. The teacher will have little time to waste or talk about unnecessary and unwanted matters in the class. Moreover, some methods of internal assessment demand from the teacher a high level of psychological and intellectual maturity and expertise in order to be objective in evaluation, as for instance evaluation on the basis of participation in seminar or

group discussion. As examination is not at the end of the year or semester, but at regular intervals, the student cannot put off his studies for the final examination. He has to be involved in study throughout the semester or year.

Apart from the academic problems and demands, there are other constraints on the teacher and the student. The "ethical" demands of internal assessment are much more than those of external examination. In internal assessment the teacher is to evaluate the student who is known to him and, therefore, there is the possibility of arbitrariness on the part of the teacher. This is one of the fears in internal assessment. Thus the demand on the teacher to be impartial and to use the norms of justice and equality is much more real and pressing in internal assessment than in external examination which is designed to be impersonal. The student on his part should develop an attitude of trust and confidence towards his teacher. Thus internal assessment demands an ethical quality both of the teacher and of the student.

Implementation

Following the recommendation of the U. G. C. many universities have by now introduced internal assessment as part of the evaluation system. But the weightage given to internal assessment differs from university to university, and within university from discipline to discipline. In a very few universities, evaluation is totally based on internal assessment (i.e. 100 per cent weightage). In most of the universities internal assessment is used as a method of evaluation in addition to external examination. It is unlikely that the large affiliating universities will totally replace the system of external examination with internal assessment in the near future.

One of the consequences of internal assessment is the loss of uniformity in evaluation. In the system of external examination evaluation is more or less uniform within a university. It has often been observed that individual colleges inflate the marks/grades of internal evaluation so that the results in their institutions may appear to be good. This vain competition is a vice that has crept in with internal assessment. To tackle this problem some of the universities have the system of showing separately the marks/grades of internal assessment and external examination. In this system of marking/grading, inflation of marks/grades of internal assessment, if attempted by individual colleges, will be exposed.

There are complaints from some students about partiality and arbitrariness on the part of the teachers. But on the whole this has not turned out to be a major problem of internal assessment. Complaints about partiality and arbitrariness are part of the system of evaluation, whether it is external or internal. One of the major problems that has been observed so far is that of the inability of teachers and students to cope with the increased responsibility and work involved in internal assessment.

In some institutions internal assessment consists in sessional examinations that do not differ from external examination in form and techniques. The only difference is that they are evaluations by teachers of the institution themselves. In some other cases internal assessment is confined to some kind of home assignments, where students have all the opportunity for copying. In some institutions, where teachers are lukewarm and are not prepared to shoulder the responsibility seriously, internal assessment has deteriorated to these kinds of class tests and unguided assignments.

It may not be possible to replace the system of external examination totally with internal assessment in the affiliating universities in the near future. The universities through experience have to evolve a system of close and efficient supervision and guidance and to develop among the teachers appropriate attitudes before total internal assessment is implemented. It is also necessary that various methods of internal assessment appropriate to the different disciplines are made known to the teachers and that the teachers really employ them in evaluation.

5

Vocationalization at + 2 Stage

Jacob Aikara

An innovation in the structure of education that was meant to have implications for higher education in India is the introduction of the higher secondary stage between school and university education. The higher secondary forms the +2 stage in the three - tier system of education consisting of ten years of school education, followed by two years of higher secondary school education, after which those who intend to go for higher education will have three years of university education for the first degree. The higher secondary is designed to function as a decisive stage both for school education and for university education. It is conceived of as offering a choice between two alternatives, viz., a terminal point of school education and preparation for university education. As the former, it is expected to equip the school leavers with the necessary knowledge and skill to participate as adults effectively in the social and economic life of the larger society. As the latter, it is looked upon as a period of orientation to higher education for those who proceed to the university.

Historical Background

The idea of the 10 + 2 + 3 pattern of education and the higher secondary is not entirely new. There had been proposals for the introduction of the higher secondary between school and university education even during the British rule. About a century ago the Indian Education Commission (1882-1883) visualized the bifurcation of those who finish their school education into two streams in the upper classes of high schools, viz. one leading to the entrance examination of the universities and the other equipping the students for commercial and non-literary pursuits.

The Calcutta University Commission (1917-1919), known as the Sadler Commission, proposed ten years of school, two years of intermediate college and three years of university for the first degree. The intermediate stage was to perform one of

the two alternate functions : (i) prepare students for admission to the university and (ii) train students for employment after the intermediate education. The Commission envisaged that an increasing number of students would enter the stream directly leading to employment. Reading between the lines of the Commission's report one gathers that it was hoped that this syphoning off of students who were not academically oriented would make university education more purposive and relevant.

Ten years after the Sadler Commission, the Hartog Committee Report (1929) made the observation that there was a widespread, but mistaken, notion that the secondary school was a preparatory stage for university education with the assumption that everybody who entered school would go on for university education. In order to dispel this notion the committee recommended a purposive diversion of some of the school pupils to non-literary pursuits so that they would, instead of opting for university education, directly enter the world of work after their school education. The committee found the earlier attempts to provide vocational and industrial training to the school children to have been largely infructuous.

Obviously the recommendations of the Sadler Commission and Hartog Committee had met with little success. For, after the World War II the Report on the Post-War Educational Development (1944) – also called the Sargent Report – repeated what the earlier reports had said. It insisted that high school education also be considered as a stage complete in itself and not merely a preliminary to university education. The report recommended that the large majority of the high school leavers receive an education that would enable them to enter directly into the occupational field and that only a minority of them go on for higher education. In order to achieve this, the report recommended two types of high schools, one academic and the other technical.

After Independence

After independence there have been three important education commissions : The University Education Commission (1948 – 49) headed by S. Radhakrishnan, the Secondary Education Commission (1952–53) headed by D. A. L. Mudaliar and the Education Commission (1964 – 66) headed by D. S. Kothari. The University Education Commission, recommended twelve years of education preceding admission to university. It suggested that the duration for the first degree should be three

years. Thus, the Radhakrishnan Commission recommended the 10+2+3 formula. The Mudaliar Commission recommended a shorter duration of school education. The pattern proposed by it was 8+3+3 instead of the 10+2+3 of the Sadler Commission. The higher secondary of three years after the eight years of schooling was to prepare the students for university education or for occupation. There was criticism about the recommendation of the Mudaliar Commission that school be reduced to 8+3. Many felt that students would be too young after the eight years of school to make a decision on the choice of career or course for the +3 stage. The Kothari Commission seems to have taken this objection into account in going back to the 10+2+3 pattern.

All the earlier commissions as referred to so far recommended a restructuring of school education with a view to making the terminal stage of school more relevant for a direct entry into occupation. The report of the Kothari Commission was emphatic on this matter. The Government of India accepted the recommendations of the Kothari Commission on structuring education according to 10 + 2 + 3 pattern and decided to implement the pattern throughout the country. The Government Resolution on the report of the Commission says : " It will be advantageous to have a broadly uniform educational structure in all parts of the country. The ultimate objective should be to adopt the 10+2+3 pattern, the higher secondary stage of two years being located in schools, colleges or both according to local conditions " (Ministry of Education, 1971 : xxi). What is innovative about this restructuring is the +2 stage or the higher secondary. What has been envisaged is the introduction of a new course of education between school and university, that would help settlement in life of those who terminate schooling, and prepare for university those who want to go for higher education.

Vocationalization : Concept and Objectives

The prime objective of introducing the 10 + 2 + 3 pattern has been to equip the school leavers to enter the world of work instead of going on for university education. This main objective was sought to be achieved through the vocationalization of the higher secondary or the +2 stage. What is vocationalization ? The following is the definition given by the UNESCO in 1974. It is a " comprehensive term embracing those aspects of the educational process involving, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences and the acquisition of

practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in the various sectors of economic and social life" (NCERT, 1976 : 9). Vocationalization, thus, aims at increasing the employability of the students who complete education. It is, therefore, expected to check the aimless and unproductive education. Having been trained in some skill and professional knowledge of their choice and liking students are expected increasingly to look forward to productive work in the world rather than rush to the universities and colleges for higher education. Vocationalization may be considered as the essence of the +2 stage.

Vocationalization as described above suggests equipment of the school leaver to be gainfully and productively employed at the end of the school education. However, this is sometimes confused with what is referred to as work experience. The idea behind work experience is that students while engaged in academic pursuit may not be isolated from or lose touch with what is practical; on the contrary, they should develop themselves into practical people by keeping up their experience of work in real life situations. Further, the objective of work experience is to inculcate among the students respect for work and a sense of dignity of work especially manual work. In the schools where work experience is introduced we find students working with spades or in craft rooms. They also produce certain pieces of handicraft. Yet the focus is on participation in work rather than on training for livelihood. Vocationalization, in contrast with work experience, aims not merely at imparting experiences but at imparting knowledge and skills adequate to enable students either to be gainfully employed or to start an enterprise on their own (self-employment), immediately after completing school.

In order to achieve the goal of employment, it is important that vocationalization take into account the social and economic environment of the student — the goals, needs and potentialities of the society—as well as his individual personality — the abilities and interests of the individual. It should equip the individual to be fruitfully engaged in the social and economic life of his society. It should prepare and cultivate "the individual to understand the social reality and to realize his own potential within the framework of economic development to which the individual contributes. Education does not produce jobs, but vocationalized education makes it more likely for an individual to get a job or

to be his own master by either starting a new productive activity or a service which may satisfy a felt need of community" (NCERT 1976 : 9).

Vocational education aims at the optimum combination between the social environment and the individual personality. There are a number of vocations in which an individual may be trained. It is important to know which of these are relevant to the society in question and adapted to the abilities and interests of the individual student. Training in vocations that are irrelevant to, or beyond the needs of the society will produce only frustrated and unemployed individuals. This implies that the individual cannot have unlimited freedom of choice in terms of his aptitudes; he has to take into account society's needs and capacity to absorb the individual. At the same time it is recognised that vocations forced upon the individual will produce inefficient and disappointed manpower.

An advantage expected from vocationalization of the higher secondary stage is that it will reduce the rush for enrolment in higher education. This means that the + 2 stage will have to be terminal in the case of a large number of students. The Kothari Commission expects that not more than 50 per cent of those who complete the + 2 stage education will go for higher education. The Commission clearly states that the vocational courses should be terminal. 'It is fundamental, in our view, that such courses at this stage be predominantly terminal in character. There should always be opportunities for the exceptionally gifted child, through further study, to rejoin the mainstream and move higher. But vocational courses should not be designed with the exceptional child in mind. Bridges can be built for him, but for the greater majority these courses should be terminal, qualifying for direct entry into employment and it should be clear to the parent, child, educator and employer what type of employment the trainee will qualify for.' (Ministry of Education, 1971 : 683).

However, the objective of syphoning off the pressure from higher education is likely to fail and the rush for admission to higher education likely to continue unless those completing the vocational stream of the higher secondary get absorbed in the employment market or find opportunities for self-employment. Vocationalization, therefore, should be properly geared to the employment potential of the environment. The employment of

the higher secondary school leavers is a prerequisite for control of enrolment at higher education. Therefore, it is important that the higher secondary stage is planned and programmes implemented in a manner that ensures the employment of those who have taken vocational courses at the + 2 stage.

Implementation

All the states and Union Territories have accepted the three - tier pattern of education as recommended by the Education Commission 1964-66 and the National Policy of Education 1968. By 1979 all except four States have adopted the 10+2+3 pattern. The remaining states plan to implement the pattern by 1982-83.

It has been seen above that vocationalization is the important scheme of the + 2 stage. Vocationalization is training for employment and it has to be instituted with reference to employability both in terms of the individual's aptitudes and in terms of the society's needs. A number of difficult decisions have to be taken as to the type of vocations to be introduced, kind of training to be imparted, the qualifications required of teachers and the facilities to be provided for vocational courses. The success of the higher secondary and vocationalization will depend on the competence with which decisions on these issues are taken.

Selection of Socially Relevant Courses

Since the idea behind vocationalization is that the students will engage themselves in some kind of productive activity after the schooling, vocational courses have to be chosen on the basis of the employment potential of the social environment. A vocation that has employment potential and is socially useful in one social environment may not be so in another. In order to optimize benefits from vocationalization it is necessary to examine employment needs and potential at the regional, state or district level. Although inter-district, inter-state and inter-regional migration is possible, it would be somewhat inefficient and unwieldy to design vocational education with the assumption of mobility of the population. The number and types of vocations to be chosen for the employment potential as defined on a national scale would be immense and unmanageable. By the same logic by which district, state and regional needs - in that order - should guide vocational education in a specific school area, national needs must have priority over potential for employment abroad. Our educational institutions cannot afford

to produce cheap manpower for other countries. When possibilities for the employment of Indians abroad are a consideration, care should be taken to ensure that the provision of educational facilities is accompanied by relevant policy and administrative action that such employment provides substantial returns to the country.

When we speak of vocationalization we tend to think of industry-cum-city-oriented vocations. But, as vocationalization has to be socially relevant, in the predominantly agrarian economy of India, one cannot overlook the need to develop vocations geared to the needs of our agrarian economy. Since a good many of the people in rural India will continue to be engaged in rural occupations, one should cast off the prejudice that training for rural vocations can be confined to informal or incidental education.

Apart from the fact that the perspectives of educational planners seem to be biased in favour of urban needs, there are some complex problems in training rural students for rural occupations. When vocational education in rural areas is geared to rural needs the rural population complains that the higher secondary education is designed to block the mobility and the prospects of the rural people. There is some element of truth in this complaint. Vocationalization which only takes into account the needs and potentialities of the immediate social environment restricts the scope for geographical mobility. This affects rural people who generally think of their own development in terms of migration to cities for white collar jobs and for employment in industries. Thus planning vocationalization for rural students involves the difficult task of combining the need to provide for the demands of rural employment with the need to ensure mobility for the rural population. A certain proportion of non-rural vocational courses will have to be provided for in rural areas for the benefit of those who prefer to move out and have the aptitude for non-rural occupations. What type of courses and in what proportion should be introduced, will depend upon each locality. Those who aspire for higher education will, of course, have to be provided facilities to enter the academic stream of the higher secondary stage.

However, in as much as agriculture will, for some years to come, remain the base of the Indian economy, vocationalization in the rural areas cannot neglect agricultural vocations. The problem

essentially is one of getting the rural population to appreciate this fact and introducing economic strategies and reforms that make rural occupations attractive enough to the higher secondary school educated rural man.

Employment Prospects

Another issue related to the vocationalization of the +2 stage is the prospects of employment in the case of those who pass through the vocational stream of the +2 stage. For the success of the vocationalization of the higher secondary it is necessary that the higher secondary school leaver finds an appropriate occupation. The employers, including the government, should respect the certificate given by the educational institutions. They should not look for a higher educated person for a job for which a higher secondary school leaver is competent. This is very important if vocationalization at the higher secondary stage is to succeed. Present devaluation of the degree leads to the employment of graduates on jobs that do not call for graduate level education. Many graduate engineers in India, for example, are working merely as technicians. The Kothari Commission has observed that, while the ratio of engineers to technicians adopted in advanced countries was to be of the order of 1 : 3 or even 1 : 5 or 6, in India the aggregate ratio was 1 : 1.4 (Ministry of Education, 1971 : 687). Devaluation of degree is likely to increase, unless school education is effectively and successfully vocationalized. Wastage resulting from devaluation of education could be prevented to a great extent by increased production of middle-level manpower, which is in fact the *raison detre* of vocationalization of higher secondary school education.

Location of the +2 Stage

Another issue involved in the implementation of vocationalization has been the location of the +2 stage. There are three possibilities of locating the +2 stage, viz. (i) in schools, (ii) in colleges, and (iii) in separate institutions. There are problems to be tackled in all the three varieties of location. A serious problem of locating the +2 stage in schools, as far as vocationalization is concerned, is the lack of adequate facilities in schools. Schools are not likely to be adequate in terms of the necessary facilities for running the +2 stage, i. e. laboratories, libraries, etc. Locating the higher secondary in school, apart from adversely affecting vocationalization, means the disappearance of the first one or two years of the old pattern from the college — what

constituted the Pre-degree or Intermediate. In some colleges, especially in rural areas, the bulk of enrolment has been in the Pre-degree or Intermediate classes. It is quite likely that these colleges depend on the tuition fees of the students as a financial resource. In the context of these classes being discontinued, these colleges may not have a viable number of students and also may find it difficult to cope with the financial dislocation and depletion. Disappearance of one or two classes from college will also create the problem of surplus teachers in colleges in the initial years.

The main problem in locating the +2 stage in college is that it is likely to adversely affect an important objective of the +2 stage, viz., reducing pressure on university education. Locating the higher secondary in college is likely to create the impression among the students that the +2 stage is nothing other than the former Pre-degree/Intermediate. Students, thus, may consider it as preparatory to university education rather than as a terminal point. Very few students may feel attracted to vocational courses that would function to terminate education with the +2 stage. Besides, the problem of surplus teachers will arise in schools when the school is reduced to class X from the former class XI/XII.

Locating the +2 stage in separate institutions seems preferable to retaining it at school or elevating it to college. Separate location of the +2 stage seems to be compatible with its structure and function. Vocationalization — the most important objective of the higher secondary could be given much greater attention if the higher secondary is located in a separate institution. In an institution specially meant for the higher secondary it may be possible to concentrate on its special objectives. Secondly, in a separate institution the academic and vocational structure of the higher secondary, as different from that of routine school and college, may be better protected. In other words, in college or school, the higher secondary is likely to face the problem of lack of administrative and academic freedom. The higher secondary is a stage after ten years of school and also not a college stage. At the same time it serves as a link between school and college and also terminates education. Its functions of serving as a link between school and college and of terminating education may be better performed if it is located in a separate institution.

However, there are also problems in locating the higher

secondary in a separate institution. First of all, the financial investment required for locating the higher secondary in separate institution is very heavy. All the facilities — space, laboratory, workshop and library have to be provided anew. Secondly, separate location will make it difficult for schools and colleges to handle the problem of teachers that would arise in the initial years. Schools and colleges will find it impossible to accommodate the teachers who would become surplus as a result of the disappearance of one or two years from school or college.

The Central Government, while accepting the recommendations on the 10+2+3 pattern, seemed to have been aware of the problem and seemed, therefore, to have given the states freedom with respect to locating the +2 stage. The Government Resolution on the national policy on education allowed the higher secondary to be located "in schools, colleges or both according to local conditions" (Ministry of Education, 1971 : xxi). In fact there has been, as expected, no uniformity in the location of the +2 stage. We find the +2 stage located in schools, in colleges and in separate institutions. For example, in Kerala the +2 stage has been located in colleges and in separate institutions called junior colleges; in Karnataka it has all the three varieties of location; in Maharashtra the higher secondary is located in schools and in colleges.

Failure of Vocationalization

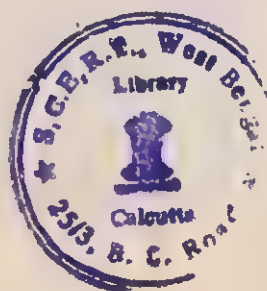
As already mentioned, what is innovative in the new pattern is the higher secondary designed to function as a stage equipping the student for entry into the world of work or preparing him for university education. How has the +2 stage been functioning, where the three — tier system has been introduced? The experience so far has been that the +2 stage has not functioned as it should have. What has happened is a simple division into 10, 2, and 3. The main objective of vocationalization has miserably failed. In the absence of vocationalization the higher secondary has been functioning as a stage preparatory to university education in most parts of India. The designation given to it as junior college in some places speaks for this function. For example, in Kerala one always considers the +2 stage as a college stage which one passes through before one starts the course for the degree; the stage is known as "pre-degree" rather than higher secondary. There is absolutely no vocational courses at this stage. In Maharashtra and other states the situation is not quite diff-

rent. Of course, there have been some experiments in vocationalization. But they have not been successful on account of various reasons as lack of resources, absence of qualified hands and inability to design job oriented vocational courses. These experiments have largely remained as programmes of work experience or (to use the new phrase) socially useful productive work. The +2 stage has been designed to have two streams : academic stream leading to university education and vocational stream preparing for employment and thus terminating education. As the vocational stream has remained a non-starter, one is not surprised to see the +2 stage continuing to function only as a stepping stone to university education. As a consequence, pressure for university education continues to be as before.

Every effort, therefore, has to be made to introduce the vocational stream at the + 2 stage. The problems connected with vocationalization have to be tackled efficiently. Initially vocationalization involves a heavy investment. It is estimated that vocational education is five times costlier than general education. Funds are necessary in order to set up well equipped laboratories, workshops and libraries and to have special training programmes for teachers. This is a problem that both the Central and the state governments jointly have to tackle. Secondly, with the introduction of vocational courses, plans must be made to have teachers competent to teach vocational courses. The kind of training, that the teachers who handle college/school education at present have, is neither adequate nor relevant for vocational teaching. Simple short-term (say, two weeks to one month) intensive training for vocational teaching, as has in some places been given to college/school teachers in order to equip them for vocational teaching, is not sufficient to produce competent teachers for the vocational courses at the higher secondary level. Teachers need to be far more rigorously and thoroughly trained. It may be useful to have collaboration with industries and commercial institutions either to obtain adequately competent personnel to teach vocational courses or to give teachers and students the "field experience" necessary to make vocationalization effective. The NCERT has rightly "suggested that part-time teachers and instructors (like doctors and motor mechanics) should be freely obtained from amongst those who are in the concerned vocation, even though they may not have the master's degree or a teacher training certificate" (NCERT, 1976 : 15). There is an added advantage

in collaborating with industries and commercial institutions. They are the prospective employers of the school leavers. Chances of employment after vocationalization at the + 2 stage will be better, if the vocational courses are conducted in collaboration with the industries and commercial and service institutions. Not only will such collaboration ensure that the employment potential of each area is realistically taken into account in the operation of vocationalization, but it will also induce the prospective employers to respect the certificate given by the educational institutions. They are not likely to look for a higher educated person for a job for which a higher secondary school leaver is competent. This is very important if vocationalization at the higher secondary stage is to succeed. There must be other mechanisms such as lowering of upper age limit for certain jobs, in order to ensure the employment of those who terminate education after the + 2 stage.

With the failure of vocationalization the higher secondary has not achieved its objectives. It remains an innovation without anything innovative. The failure of the + 2 stage to achieve its objective, has given rise to many misgivings about the restructuring of education according to the 10+2+3 pattern. Some ask how the 10+2+3 pattern is different from 11+4 or 10+3 and question the very introduction of the three-tier pattern. Others have expressed their dissatisfaction with the 10+2+3 pattern by suggesting new patterns as 8+4+3. One must understand that it is not the three-tier pattern as such that has been ineffective or faulty. If the pattern has not proved itself functional, the cause lies in the failure of vocationalization of the +2 stage. Instead of being cynical about, or mourning over, the pattern, one could consider the present stage as the beginning of the change to be completed through a more efficient vocationalization of the +2 stage.

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Autonomous Colleges

Rajulton S. J.

Brief History of Autonomy of Colleges

The underlying principles of the idea of "autonomy of colleges" are as old as, if not older than, those of the idea of "autonomy of universities". For almost a century, since the establishment of the first universities of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras in 1857, these principles have been acknowledged, verbalized, analysed and essayed without bearing fruit in practice. To say so is not to belittle the magnanimous efforts of a few dedicated to the cause of education, but to bring to light the remarkably long period of gestation of any educational innovation.

Uniformity, a Deterrent to Progress

It is commonly acknowledged now that the basic reason for the malaise that has set over our educational system is an undue insistence on uniformity. This was voiced as early as 1883 by the first Indian Education Commission, known as the Hunter Commission. This Commission emphasized the urgent need for variety in the type of higher education to ward off the greatest danger to higher education, namely, the "too exclusive attention to the mere passing of exams", and to deflate "the personal advantages to be derived therefrom" (University of Calcutta, 1957 : 136-38). But as this Commission was not concerned directly with higher education, its recommendations did little affect the existing universities or their policies.

The neglect of the diagnostic observation of the Hunter Commission led soon to a lament on the "falling standards" in higher education. The first solemn warning came in 1889, when Lord Lansdowne, the Chancellor of the University of Calcutta, said in reference to the "extension" of higher education : "..... we are likely to hear even more than we do at present of the complaint that we are turning out every year an increasing number of young men whom we have provided with an intellectual equipment, *admirable in itself but practically useless* to them on account

of the smaller number of openings which the professions afford for gentlemen who have received *this kind of education*" (Siqueira, 1960: 78, italics mine). University education continued turning out in great numbers graduates who were no more than "mere machines of memory" as a result of a large amount of ill-digested knowledge, with few original ideas, much less with a power to observe and judge for themselves. The subsequent reforms introduced by Lord Dufferin in 1882, forced the existing colleges to improve their standards. Though the basic principles of these reforms had nothing objectionable theoretically, university men of the day raised a storm of protests against them on grounds that the autonomy of universities was jeopardized.

Autonomy of Universities or of Colleges ?

One of the most indomitable men of the times who stood for autonomy of universities was Sir Asutosh Mookerjee, later to become the Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University. His "magic voice of assurance and courage to dream", as Rabindranath Tagore described him, raised a battle cry for the principles of academic freedom not only of universities, but of affiliated colleges, as well. Academic freedom is not, according to him, confined to universities, but fundamentally it is the prerogative of affiliated colleges. His idea of colleges as "corporate bodies", somewhat akin to the concept of residential institutions where one could envisage a close contact between teachers and students, still remains an alluring dream. It was during the time when he was fighting against odds in making the university a teaching body that lone principal of the Presidency College, Calcutta, tried in vain to obtain autonomy for his college. His lone attempt, as all lone attempts in a traditional society, was engulfed by the raging controversy over the "centralisation of post-graduate studies" and soon vanished leaving no trace behind in the history of the University of Calcutta, (University of Calcutta, 1957: 251-262; Sinha, 1966: 109; also John, 1976: vii).

Agra University's Statute

Only after about four decades, the question of autonomy of colleges was raised once again by Dr. R. K. Singh, the then principal of B. R. College, Agra, and later Vice-Chancellor of the universities of Meerut and Himachal Pradesh. Because of his enthusiastic role in the debate that followed, the Agra University's Senate passed a resolution supporting the idea of "autonomous

colleges" and amended the Acts. Very soon, the Bill was passed by the State Legislature (in 1954). But to date, no college has been declared either by the University or by the State Government as autonomous. As Prof. John points out, it is a telling symptom of the apathy of the university establishment towards this new venture in education (1976 : viii) — quick to safeguard its own rights but slow and reluctant to recognize the same in its affiliated colleges.

Education Commission 1964-66

Meanwhile, the expression "autonomous colleges" came to gain a sort of respectability in academic circles, an expression borrowed perhaps from the US educational system. And the Education Commission 1964-66 did not fail to incorporate the same idea in its report (11.41.2). The logical sequence of the Commission's recommendations is worth examining, as its presumptions have come under much criticism (John, 1976 : 3-6). Following the Commission's recommendation for autonomy of colleges, the Ministry of Education appointed a committee in November, 1966 to study the relevant aspects of this recommendation. Every good-willed academician accepted the recommendation in principle. But misapprehensions of various kinds, conveniently lumped together under "practical wisdom", shelved the idea for a few years. Even as late as 1971, cautions were expressed in a publication of the proceedings of a seminar organized by the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Simla, against this new venture, taking into account "the present context of our country where politicians and others wield a good deal of influence" over universities (Wodeyar, 1971 : 202)

Pioneer in Autonomy

However, the Madurai American College in the State of Tamil Nadu, under the dynamic leadership of its principal, Dr. Thangaraj, took a bold step towards autonomy by starting a self-examination by November, 1967 and identifying areas of strengths and weaknesses and the "direction in which we would develop if we had the freedom and the resources." After six long years of preparation, the college submitted its application to the Madurai University of recent nascence, and in October 1973, the University recommended to the UGC that autonomous status be conferred on the American College. This recommendation having been accepted by the UGC, the Madurai University made in

March 1964 an amendment to its Acts of 1965 to incorporate autonomous colleges under its purview, and sent the amendment to the state government to be passed by the legislature.

The UGC Circular, 1974

It was then, for unknown reasons (John, 1976 : x), that the UGC in 1974 sent out a circular complete with guidelines, to the universities asking them to recommend for final approbation those colleges that wished to be autonomous. The University of Madras, then under the enthusiastic leadership of Dr. Malcolm Adiseshiah, responded with the proposal of eight colleges under its domain for autonomy (Loyola College, Madras; Madras Christian College, Tambaram; Vivekananda College, Madras-for partial autonomy of its post-graduate departments; PSG Arts and PSG Technology College, Coimbatore; St. Joseph's College, Tiruchirappalli; Avinashilingam Home Science College for women, Coimbatore; and Regional Engineering College, Tiruchirappalli-partial). The Madurai University came with the proposal of three more colleges (Madurai College, Lady Doak College, both at Madurai; and Parasakthi College, Courtallam). These two universities, making necessary amendments in their Acts, submitted them to the state legislature in 1976. The Tamil Nadu state legislature passed the bill for autonomous colleges only in August, 1977.

Documents on Autonomy

Following the sanction by the state government, these two universities sent documents to the colleges recognizing their autonomous status. To any casual reader, it would be clear that these documents have been worded precisely on the terms of the Education Commission's Report and the UGC Circular in 1974, in delineating the powers of autonomy. According to the document: (a) autonomy means (i) framing courses of studies, (ii) arranging for instruction to students, (iii) devising methods of evaluation, examinations of tests pertaining the award of degree/diplomas by the university, and (iv) admission of students, (b) subject to conditions (i) admission of students conforming to the minimum qualifications laid down by the university for the courses of study and to the rules of reservation of candidates belonging to scheduled castes/tribes, (ii) for a period of five years from the academic year 1978-79, and subject to review of the functioning of the college at the end of three years, and (iii) under the com-

petence of the Syndicate to extend the period beyond five years on an application made by the college; only the Syndicate has the power to revoke autonomy conferred at any time after scrutiny and after giving due notice to the college concerned before the expiry of the period of five years (i.e. in case of deteriorating standards).

It is more than two years since the autonomous programme in these colleges started functioning. Apart from the universities, of Madras and Madurai, no other university seems to have come forward to confer autonomy on its affiliated colleges. Perhaps experimental measures are going on in colleges like St. Xavier's Bombay. Colleges and Universities not yet daring to take up this challenge are looking forward to knowing the way autonomy works in these colleges.¹

Thus, a century long attempt at making higher education more varied in character, redeeming it from the thralldom of uniformity and providing it with a richer life due to diversity has borne fruit only now. An interesting observation, even in the brief history we have outlined, is that mostly it is the principals of affiliated colleges who have played a prominent role in attempts at obtaining autonomy of colleges. These attempts were smothered, down the century, on grounds that they sponsor racialism and colonialism under the British rule, and elitism and opportunism under the democratic rule. Whether these charges against conferring autonomy to affiliated colleges have any sound basis, both at the conceptual and implementation levels, will be examined in the following pages.

A Cursory Glance at the Ills of the Present System

Volumes have been written on the demoralizing state of affairs in our affiliating university system, modelled on the London University and preserved in spite of its obsolescence. All the Education Commissions have invariably pointed out the rigidity of the system, perpetuating conservatism and timidity in trying out new ideas. The Education Commission 1964-66 in particular spelt out as the most serious danger the apathy of the educators and the university men to reflect seriously over the present situa-

1. A few more colleges in the Madras University have applied for autonomy, and as this article is under preparation, news arrives that the Madras Law College has been conferred autonomy for Post-graduate courses.

tion and effect proper measures (11-12). If at all one begins to enumerate the woes of our present system, as the Commission says, it will never be an exaggerated picture. "If anything, it errs on the side of underestimation" (11-15). Without entering into a detailed discussion, let us be content with briefly pointing out the nature of the malaise that has befallen this system in our times.

A rigid system enforcing uniformity at all levels has only reduced teachers to the level of "common labourers" as obtaining elsewhere, say in industries, whose job it is to instruct what is prescribed, no more but desirably less, for a stipulated remuneration. Any extra work outside this prescribed uniformity is something which will not be undertaken unless extra remuneration accompanies it. Teachers are neither involved in the formulation of the syllabi which they are required to teach, nor are they involved in testing and evaluating the methods they have followed or the product they produce. This is all the job of the foreman, the affiliating university. As a result, one finds very rarely an atmosphere of "intellectual passion" among teachers. An absence of research-impregnated atmosphere among teachers has given rise to a suffocating and virulent atmosphere of indifference and cynicism, which sooner than later corrupts even the new entrants into the system. As an inevitable consequence, we have an education divested of research. Administratively speaking, excellence has become something which can be tolerated. As one vice-chancellor said "... the professor may engage in research, provided it does not interfere with the teaching function of the university and the teaching load of the professor" (NFE, 1974; 62)

Students come and go in ever growing numbers, little affected and little affected by the system. On the one hand, they pass through the courses, either through their own efforts or through the condescending way their answer papers are corrected in the university exams. And on the other hand, we have many of our students coming from comparatively uneducated homes, "the first generation learners" as they are called, who are totally ill-prepared at the secondary level for any genuine higher education. What they receive as education does not count; but what they receive as certificates and diplomas do. And the greater the number of these, the better and the easier will be their future. With little experience of any kind of independent study, quickened curiosity

or intellectual discussion with their teachers and colleagues, with little understanding of lectures in a language they hardly understand, and with much of learning by rote, they all come out of the factory, often branded as the first class product, only to be launched into the ever expanding universe of unemployment.

To accommodate themselves to the deplorable plights of students and teachers, the colleges and universities which profess to cater to the needs of the public at large, have been ready to distort their own ideals and objectives. Mushrooming of colleges especially after independence under the policy of expansion of higher education, has rendered meaningless the ideals of higher education. The quality and standard of education maintained by these colleges present a wide spectrum of the worth of higher education. Any question on improvement of standards of these colleges, either through inspection or through rules of affiliation, is beside all common sense. Pecuniary interests of managements have made some of these colleges nothing other than business enterprises. And ironically enough, mismanaged colleges take refuge under the umbrella of the university with their claims of affiliation. Even the efforts of some of the outstanding colleges at improvement of standards and at modernization are thwarted in the name of equality and uniformity. It is the slowest runner who has been allowed to set the pace of higher education in India (John, 1976: 16).

Universities, on their part, have come to be regarded as institutions of mass production of graduates, purely through a process of mass scale examinations, no matter how badly they are managed. Leakage of question papers, mass copying intimidation of invigilators and corruption of examiners, all have become the order of the day and have come to be accepted as the life-style of universities. Condescension on the part of the universities towards the plight of non-achievers in the examinations has led to inventions of mockeries of higher education, even at the post-graduate level, in seemingly graceful terms such as "moderation" and "grace marks". These machinations to maintain the lowest possible standards have come to be understood as gentlemanly tolerance and understanding, and hence more concessions are demanded by students.

It would be nothing but folly to expect this system to improve the standards of higher education. Even if new ideas are to be

experimented with, "it will be difficult to make this monster move" (Naik, 1975 : 109). It is commonly acknowledged that the root cause of all these evils is the very affiliating system, which protects and perpetuates conservatism, rigidity and resistance to change. If any effective change is to be made in higher education, it is this system which is to be thrown overboard, lock, stock and barrel. But unfortunately, to abandon a system we have been so much accustomed to and which has become so dear to us, seems to be a matter of life and death for many. Hence, "to part with it at various stages" according to the practical wisdom of the ages seems to be a viable solution. And so, "autonomy of colleges" which has by now become somewhat respectable among the educated circles has come to be accepted, at least in principle. In the earlier section we have seen in brief the historical development of the introduction of autonomous colleges. But it should be borne in mind that this is not the end-all of the problem that we face. A true remedy for all the maladies of our educational system should be, in the words of Shankar Narayan : "Even as the universities have been given powers to disaffiliate a college when it has substantiated reasons to do so, it should be equally open for an affiliated college to redeem itself from the system of affiliation when it is felt that such an association is not any more conducive to maintenance and improvement of standards" (NFE, 1974 : 39).

Meaning of Autonomy and its Implications

Autonomy, as the etymology of the word indicates, means "self-norm". An autonomous college, therefore, becomes a norm to itself. The college will set norms for its own growth or decline, for further development or for further deterioration. Left to itself, it will take up the responsibility of its own existence, instead of seeking an asylum under the fabric of the university system. In sum, autonomy means that a college will become the measure of its own excellence. The self-norm taken up by the college will necessarily imply that the college has passed through the childhood days when it was fed with milk and given a motherly protection by the affiliating university. It will now enter into its adulthood and maturity to stand on its own feet, in responsibility and freedom. This freedom that the college will enjoy is not so much a 'freedom from' as a 'freedom for'. It is not so much a freedom from the affiliating system as a freedom for self-norm.

What would be the features of this newly acquired 'freedom for' will be examined in the following paragraphs.

A college, just because it is an educational institution, is first of all free for academic growth, which is necessarily linked to a responsible academic freedom. Without academic freedom, there is no educational institution worth the name. The importance and implications of academic freedom have been spelt out by the Education Commission (13-03). As it is, there is no serious restriction of academic freedom in our educational institutions; but in autonomous colleges, teachers should practise more of it vigorously and responsibly through "critical examination, evaluation and evolution of concepts and policies over the entire spectrum of the society's concern and involvement". All this with a view to providing an intellectual climate which alone can improve academic quality.

As a college is an institution which subsists in its teachers and students, its academic freedom would also mean a freedom to learn and a freedom to teach, *in that order*. The order is to be kept because students and teachers are both learners, and students cannot learn from those who have stopped learning. An autonomous college, therefore, should be an institution where learning reigns supreme. Learners should be free to choose those courses which they think would help them grow. Students in our country enter into colleges at a very critical period of their development; their years in colleges are unique opportunities for them to grow and to mould themselves for the rest of their lives. Hence, they should have "frequently a greater choice to determine the course of their lives through their own choices while they are in college than at any earlier or later time in life" (Carnegie Commission, *Summary Report*, 36). Implications of this freedom should be spelt out clearly and from the practical point of view (e.g. not every college can offer all the courses desired by students) by every autonomous college in defining, organizing and trying out various courses (for suggestions, cf. John, 1976: 33-81).

Those who are entrusted with the task of teaching would exercise their freedom to teach in the way they can do best and to test in the way they think best. "It is necessary to place complete trust on the ability and honesty of the teaching staff, even though not all teachers may warrant it" (NFE, 1974: 38). This freedom given to teachers in pursuance of their own scholarship is very

essential if the unimaginative process of examination system that we have today is to be discarded. However, this freedom places a great responsibility on teachers themselves for improving the methodology and the content of the courses they handle. The administrative reforms in autonomous colleges should be oriented to ensuring this freedom to teachers, their commitment to scholarship, research and responsibility to bring out their best. It would be worth studying and implementing the Education Commission's recommendations on teaching methods and evaluation (11.42-57) along with those of the Carnegie Commission on the motivation of teachers (*Summary Report*, 75-93).

For an effective implementation of academic freedom, an autonomous college must be free to organize various measures that are conducive to preserve the freedom of students to learn and of teachers to teach. In other words, autonomy implies a freedom to self-govern. This freedom for self-governance implies devising newer and newer structures of governance, structures that will not regress to the old patterns of uniformity built on the "greatest common factor", but structures which will ensure the preservation and enhancement of diversity. The milieu that would be created by this freedom for governance will be impregnated with an inner thirst for excellence at all levels, academic, administrative, financial and planning. This requires the formation of various bodies at different levels. In the present context of autonomy, where the powers of the affiliating university are not usurped, the college has to restructure its administrative system in such a way that the most efficient and rational use of the available resources is made.

A caution is in order in this context. The most serious danger in the question of devising its own structures lies in just duplicating the structures of the university itself. It may be easy to fall back on the existing university structures, but doing so will make it easy for autonomous colleges to slide back into the same old rut from which they are supposed to free themselves. Questions like, "It is done in the university, why not we?" or "It is not done in the university, why should we?" do nothing but betray the strong attachment to traditional structures, no matter whether they serve the purpose. In talking about the structural changes to be introduced in an autonomous set-up, it would be worth considering, by managements and teachers and those who

are involved in framing the administrative system, the recommendations of the Carnegie Commission on structural changes (*Summary Report*, 108-114), which are drawing more and more attention of our educationists these days (e. g. Joshi, 1977 : 160-62).

Question of Finance

The UGC circular merely states that autonomy will not "entitle the college to any extra-financial privileges; nor does autonomy mean transfer of financial commitments to the UGC from the managements or the state governments." But "any marginal assistance needed to provide for any special academic programme developed by such colleges" will be given by the UGC. Such an assistance is promised for the first five years in the first instance. However, it goes without saying that the implications of autonomy will not materialize if a college is unable to plan on the basis of the principles it has evolved for itself and assure itself of funds. The grants now given "with too many strings attached" and given retrospectively do lay curbs on the implementation of autonomous programme. This problem is to be tackled in collaboration with the state governments and the UGC. As Amrik Singh says, autonomy should also imply a freedom to raise funds and disburse them in accordance with the ethical and moral principles but without detailed controls by the government. It may be suggested that organizing a Planning Committee and a Financial Committee may help the autonomous college to ensure a sound balance of activities such as optimum size of enrolment (NFE, 1974 : 73).

Diffidence in the Working of Autonomy

It is a fact that a great number of college teachers and university men have expressed their opinions against granting autonomy to colleges. Prof. John traces such antagonism of college teachers to the long-held "myths" of the superior status of the university teachers vis-a-vis the college teachers and of the university departments vis-a-vis the college departments (1976). Some of the fears expressed by these teachers are: (i) it would create an unhealthy division of colleges into elite and non-elite, (ii) it would bring about diversity in the ranks of teachers and destroy the "federal character" of the university, (iii) the pressures and pulls that would be exercised over teachers by students and by society at large would ultimately lower the standards, and (iv) it would bestow arbitrary powers upon governing bodies.

The baselessness of these fears has been pointed out by no less an august body than that of vice-chancellors in their seventh conference at Delhi, 1975 (UGC Minutes, Working Papers, item No. 7). All these fears have one basic question in common: Why allow diversity in higher education? To this question, there can be only one answer. "If uniformity is the vulnerability of the present situation, then diversity seems to be the best insurance against it." If this basic principle is accepted, the baselessness of the above fears can be easily brought to light.

Beside the fact that a classification of "elite" and "non-elite" colleges is an already existing phenomenon, it has to be brought to bear in mind that the term "elitism" is a term glibly used to jumble together a quest for excellence with a quest for privilege. Uniform ranks of teachers have never been accepted by teachers themselves in the entire history of the university education in India. Moreover, as Prof. John asks, is the solidarity of teachers based on teaching the same curricula in the same manner and having the same style of evaluation? And in all honesty, would these protagonists of the "solidarity" of teachers agree for parity in scales of pay for university and college teachers? The third fear about the performance of the new system betrays a lack of self-confidence. This can be traced to the lack of sense of belonging to the system, and one of the basic reasons for granting autonomy is precisely to rectify this situation. The guardians and transmitters of TRUTH, as Gandhiji envisaged education, would hopefully be more aware than ever that they are the trustees in whose hands the society has entrusted future generations of the country. Perhaps, the suggestion made by J. N. Kapur deserves the attention of all teachers in autonomous colleges: "Before a college becomes autonomous, its teachers should develop a code of conduct for themselves and the responsibility of implementing this code of conduct should be given to the court of teachers themselves" (1975 : 224).

Finally, the fear regarding the arbitrary powers of managements may have some basis in reality. But critics forget the fact that the freedom given to colleges is first and foremost an academic freedom. If there is any freedom of governance, it is only with a view to promote this academic freedom. "The new task will be more academic than managerial" (John, 1976 : 16). Moreover, the selection of autonomous colleges is based also on the criterion of sound institutional management, and the existing

regulations of the university and the state education department still safeguard the rights of teachers. In fact, freedom conferred on a college accrues more to teachers and students than to governing bodies.

Autonomy of colleges is a proffered remedy for the malaise in the present affiliating system. It is meant for liberating students, teachers and managements from the miserable menaces and gyves crippling their faculties and for encouraging them to go ahead with innovations that will keep alive the ideal of academic excellence. Colleges ready to take up this challenge will have to struggle against odds that will invariably threaten their march ahead, odds within and without. Colleges not yet ready can still prepare themselves so that they too may one day be able to claim that they are the university. "I am the university, thou shalt have no other" (John : 1976 : 29).

Social Objective

The foregoing pages would have helped us to understand the objectives of autonomous colleges in general on academic and administrative lines. These objectives can be summarily stated as the pursuit of excellence, training in leadership, enhancing students' capability to cope with real life situations and an overall stress on scholarship and responsible freedom. All these are, however, minor as compared to one major objective of education, namely, commitment to social justice.

It is worth noting that in all communications from the UGC and from the state departments, there is a conspicuous silence on the objectives of autonomous colleges, except for a passing reference to social justice in the recommendations of the UGC Sponsored Zonal Workshops on Autonomous Colleges. The Report of this Workshop says : "Commitment to social justice and not to elitism should be the motive power behind autonomous colleges". Perhaps the objectives were taken for granted or they were left to be framed by autonomous colleges themselves, since much talk on social justice is nowadays in the air and a vehement plea has already been made by the Education Commission for educational justice (Ch. VI of the Report). In an article like this, however limited in scope, an emphasis on this social objective of autonomous colleges is a must, as this is a challenge which everybody likes to shirk the responsibility of, and a challenge which has met with very little effective response.

No college, whether autonomous or non-autonomous and no matter managed by whom, can lose sight of the social obligations it is committed to. And any educational innovation which bears no relevance to the needs and formation of society around is devoid of meaning and value. As Dr. Adiseshiah points out: "If the objective of the autonomous college is not simply to do a little better than what is being done by today's higher educational institutions, not simply to be a pilot project or demonstration centre in attaining what is called the peaks of academic excellence, then this establishing of societal needs that it will serve must be its starting point" (NFE, 1974 : 60). In other words, formulating the objectives of autonomous colleges should start with a reordering of existing priorities, if not already done. Thus, for example, the inculcation of values should be the highest priority, instead of the lowest at present. Development of skills while learning should be given the second priority, de-emphasizing the information-gathering which has the highest priority now. And so on. If such basic changes in the ordering of priorities are accepted, then there will have to be corresponding changes in the content of curriculum and administration of the system. Thus, for example it may imply a reduction in the quantum of curricula (with emphasis no more on quantity but on quality), orientation of curricula to inculcate social, ethical, moral, religious and national values, introduction of better methods of teaching and learning, development of study habits in students, inclusion of syllabi oriented to study the problems of the community around and so on. In this last respect, worthy of serious consideration by those who are involved in framing the syllabi, is the suggestion by Naik that political education be given a place in the curriculum of colleges (1975 : 64-68), if at all education that we impart now is meant to purge the awful state of affairs in Indian politics today.

Reordering of priorities with consequent changes in the content of curriculum should be governed by the major objective of concern for development and social justice. The governance of autonomous colleges should be such that equality of opportunity in education, inculcation of a sense of social justice to promote restoration of social order, preparing the present day youth to meet the problems of tomorrow that can possibly be foreseen, etc. are assured in the normal life-style of the colleges and recognized as a major responsibility of one and all involved in the noble task of education.

Autonomy Programme in Two Jesuit Colleges

To talk of ideals is one thing; to have them implemented is another. It is all the more difficult when the context in which ideals are to be implemented is not quite congenial to any radical change. As the new venture of autonomy has been launched by a few colleges, a feedback from staff, students and administration of these colleges will be of great value, both for themselves and for those which are contemplating to take up the same challenge in the years to come. Admittedly, it is too early for any conclusion to be made on the success or failure of this new venture; but this does not condone a sort of reluctance to have an evaluation at each and every stage of implementation. To presume that every thing would be crystal clear at the very threshold of autonomy is to be oblivious of the gradual progress of learning, and to presume that everything will meet with failure is to betray a deep-seated antipathy to any innovation.

Purpose and Conduct of the Survey

To study the way autonomy is being implemented, a survey was conducted recently, as a preparation for this article, in Loyola College, Madras and in St. Joseph's College, Tiruchirappalli.² Evaluation of the programme in the two colleges was done mainly by survey research methods through sampling techniques. Data were obtained from staff and students through questionnaires and from the principals through interviews. The main objectives of the study were: (i) to measure the degree of response of students and staff to the very concept of autonomous colleges (this is done through the technique of semantic differential), (ii) to understand the hopes and fears of students and staff involved in the

2. It is worth noting that St. Joseph's was, in a sense, autonomous at its earliest history (1944) as the University of Madras had not yet been established then. The choice of these two colleges was mainly on grounds of convenience and of geographical location. Of convenience, because, as a Jesuit myself, I can have a rather easy access to these colleges, staff and students, besides the fact that this study could help us Jesuits to plan better for the future course of action. Of geographical location, because these two colleges are at the north and south ends of the jurisdiction of the Madras University. An attempt was made to include two colleges of the Madurai University (American College, and Lady Doak College, Madurai) but unfortunately the prevailing disturbed atmosphere in the campus of the American College and the question of "fullness of time" for such a study in Lady Doak did not permit the inclusion of these two colleges in the study.

autonomy programme, (iii) to study how far new methods of teaching and learning have been implemented, (iv) to know the reactions of students to the revised curriculum, internal assessment procedures and conduct of examinations by the college, (v) to know the reactions of the staff to the way the programme works and to measure their willingness and cooperation to effect the desirable changes in the educational system, e.g. in their teaching methods, and (vi) to obtain an overall assessment of the programme by the principals in the light of their experience for the last one and a half years, and the hurdles, constraints they face in implementing the programme. Within the limited scope of this article, findings on these objectives cannot be treated elaborately, but a mention of a few important ones will be made here, without having much recourse to statistical jargon.³

Impressive Positive Attitude

To begin with, it is very heartening to observe that a vast majority of students and staff are very happy and positive about the new programme; thus, of the respondents, 77 per cent of students and 93 per cent of teachers in Loyola, and 69 per cent of students and 90 per cent of teachers in St. Joseph's express their favourable disposition to the programme. To a question put to students whether they would prefer to join an autonomous college or a non-autonomous college, given an option between the two, 61 per cent of Loyola and 68 per cent of St. Joseph's say that they would prefer an autonomous to a non-autonomous college; similarly to a question put to the staff, on the assumption that a teaching post is offered to them in an autonomous as well as in a non-autonomous college, 78 per cent of Loyola and 84 per cent of St. Joseph's say that they would prefer to take the opportunity offered by the autonomous college. And to mention without entering into technical details, both staff and students of both the colleges exhibit rather high positive attitude on the semantic differential scale, students with a higher scale than teachers. The fear that the autonomy programme will wean students away from these colleges resulting in an appreciable drop in the number of those willing to undergo such a programme has been belied by roughly about 30 per cent increase in the number of application forms received by the principals of both these colleges. This is an

3. A complete report of the study is available.

obvious indication of the immense trust, hope and expectation that the public at large reposes in the new programme.

Having observed the overall positive impression of students and staff, let us enter into some detail as to how the programme is being implemented and as to whether there is still a vast room for improvement.

Before launching themselves into the autonomy programme, as a preparation, these two colleges had various kinds of orientation programmes, mainly for the staff, such as group dynamics and seminars on methods of teaching and evaluation. But a motivation programme for students seems to have been sadly neglected, mainly for reasons of practical difficulties as to "how" and "when", for such a large number of students. However, information on how the programme would work has been handed to students piecemeal, which as the study reveals, has led to some misgivings on the part of students. Students still complain about the conflicting information being handed to them by teachers. What is to be deplored is the feeling created among the students that they are the "guinea pigs" for the staff and administration to experiment upon, and also a not too healthy way in which some teachers pass on information to them. For example, there is nothing more damaging to the purpose of these reforms than the uncongenial and uncordial way the aim of internal assessment is explained: as one student recalls his master's words, "You, boys, behave well in the class. Your future is under my thumb!" Whatever this may mean, there is an obvious reference to the internal assessment, which holds many students unnecessarily in fright and tension. It is necessary, therefore, to plan a well-organized orientation programme for students, and in a way, it is a must at the beginning of the academic year to the new entrants, if the programme is to be accepted by students wholeheartedly and enthusiastically. In spite of these aberrations on the part of a few teachers, students of these two colleges exhibit a remarkably positive, mature and balanced disposition towards the autonomy programme, perhaps more than what teachers themselves do. Thus, for example, "fear of partiality" in internal assessment is not an over-riding factor in their evaluation of the programme (Roughly about 60 per cent of student-respondents say that they don't have any such fear in the new programme, though they point out the glaring defects in the way internal assessment is being conducted).

Administrative Reforms

At the administrative level, both the colleges have set up with minor variations, academic bodies, such as Boards of Studies, Academic Council and Staff Council to frame the syllabi, revise them in the light of experience, to suggest personnel for evaluation and to advise the principals on various matters relating to the implementation of the programme. Boards of Studies in Loyola have been constituted of all members of the faculty (thus making every staff member involved in the preparation of the curriculum) and two professionals from outside. But in St. Joseph's, not all members of the faculty are on the Boards of Studies. This has led some teachers to be disinterested in the implementation of the programme. As students point in their evaluation, those staff members who are not involved in the framing of the syllabi seem to shirk their responsibility, passing on the blame to the Boards in expressions like; "All these are from the top, I have nothing to do with it". Such remarks given by students are worth considering by the administration and the Boards.

Regarding the curriculum, a very common complaint by almost all students of both the colleges is about the "overloaded curriculum". Neither are the teachers able to "finish the portion," nor are the students able to digest the vast portion in a short time. Some students honestly admit: "I have finished the course and I have done well in the exams, but honestly I don't know what I have learnt." On the one hand, teachers seem to be under the impression that "raising standards" means inclusion of all modern theories in the curriculum. On the other hand, as the principal of Loyola points out, students are not accustomed to hard work and so they will find the curriculum overloaded till they get used to it. Persuasion on the part of teachers and conviction on the part of students will work out a viable solution.

The Academic Council in each of these colleges, consisting of professors of each department, one additional staff member by rotation, student representatives and 'externs' representing the university and the community around, is more of a legal body. It has, as its main functions, to ratify the curriculum, to examine the modes of evaluation, to pass the final results of examinations, and to suggest various corrective measures to be considered by the Boards.

Regarding the question of finance on the administrative side

of the autonomy programme, principals of both the colleges observe that they are able to scrape through the additional expenditures involved in the implementation of the autonomy programme with the present UGC grant of Rs. 1 lakh. At present, the UGC seems to disburse the grant only at the end of the academic year, or even much later, by studying the projects submitted each year by the college. Both the principals express their wish that this grant be made earlier during the year, so that the managements may not feel burdened in looking elsewhere for funds to meet the expenditures during the course of the year. A serious handicap due to the lack of finance seems to be the inability of the principals to have additional staff members for an efficient implementation of the programme. This has been observed by other autonomous colleges as well.

Courses

Regarding the flexibility of courses, there seems to be little headway in these two colleges, though these objectives are mentioned in their bulletins. Practical difficulties in implementing them seem to be a major hurdle. Lack of personnel and of adequate number of classrooms, accommodating a multiplicity of courses in the regular time table, obtaining inter-departmental cooperation, etc. are some such practical difficulties. Loyola, however, is definitely thinking in terms of flexibility and interdisciplinary courses, while, as the principal admits, no thinking seems to be in the air at present in St. Joseph's. It would be very desirable to move towards this goal, and the earlier the better. Students are aware of such a need and express it in their suggestions.

These colleges have started a few job-oriented courses, such as, Journalism, Scientific French, Statistical Genetics, Business Management, Rhetoric, etc. in Loyola, and Photography, Workshop Practice, Computer-Programming, Bio-physics, etc. in St. Joseph's, to mention only a few. The principal of St. Joseph's expresses his happiness at the sense of satisfaction among students taking up these "additional courses" and at the general mad rush for such programmes. However, the need of job-orientation in general curriculum and in the methods of teaching is spelt out by students. It is a difficult task to strike a balance between "abstract learning", as higher education is, and "job-oriented learning" as social objectives require. According to the principals, job-oriented curriculum and teaching would be looked into sooner than later,

now that a major break-through in structural changes has been achieved in the last one and a half years. Students, on their part, very much desire an emphasis on practical applicability of what they learn in class-rooms as it is this which will make them employable later. To a question whether they have learnt to apply to practical situations what they have learnt in classrooms after the two semesters in the autonomy programme, 30 per cent of Loyola students say "yes", and 57 per cent say "no", and 48 per cent of St. Joseph's students say "yes" and 48 per cent say "no". From what students have to say in their comments and suggestions, one observation stands out clear. If at all students exhibit any serious misgivings about the autonomous programme, it is related to their future: their employability. This has been spelt out very emphatically by students of St. Joseph's. They seem to be under the false impression (or have they been misinformed on this matter?) that all these sorts of experiments in their learning career would have a deleterious effect on their future employability, as no employers would be willing to take them. One wonders how and whence they got such a false impression. Certainly this needs be rooted out at its very inception.

A glowing tribute has been paid to the English Departments in both the colleges, more emphatically in Loyola, for practical orientation of courses and for organizing remedial programmes for weaker students. Students express their wish that other departments emulate the well-planned out and executed courses in English. The English Departments have planned out the remedial courses as an integral part of the general curriculum. Other departments still have to think in such terms.

Courses on Ethical Studies are given in both the colleges. Though a question on this was not included in this study, a simultaneous evaluation made on this course in Loyola, reveals that, contrary to so many rumours of probable misgivings, students are in general very appreciative of the course. Their major complaint is the lack of qualified personnel to handle this course. This course has been made compulsory in both the colleges with credits attached. A question raised by students of Loyola is why not make this course elective, instead of thrusting down their throats ethical values which are personal and which belong to the realm of conviction and acceptance by an individual.

Methods of Teaching

Traditional ways of giving lectures and notes are preserved

by many teachers, especially of the Arts and the Humanities. Seminars, discussion groups and the like are sparingly used by them. Because, as students themselves point out, teachers have not been trained in these novel ways of teaching. Tutorials seem to be very much in vogue in the Sciences and are appreciated by students in general except for a few aberrations such as teachers' unwillingness to offer personal guidance, especially to poor performers. Independent study, especially of high achievers, has not yet been considered by teachers in general. However, 55 per cent of students in Loyola and 63 per cent of students in St. Joseph's express their wish to be left to themselves for independent study. Allied to the possibility of independent study is the problem of attendance which is uppermost in the minds of a majority of students, especially with reference to allocation of marks to attendance in Loyola (10 per cent of internal assessment). The two principals have different views on this problem; while the principal of St. Joseph's says that he would encourage independent study and free attendance, the principal of Loyola argues in favour of enforcing minimum attendance and retaining the allocation of marks to attendance, as it is, in his experience, a life-saver for many under-achievers who put in a lot of efforts in their study and yet fail to score minimum pass marks in a given course.

Mechanics of Evaluation

A vast majority of students in both the colleges are aware and very appreciative of the *benefits* of internal assessment. They think that the system makes them really study. At the same time they find it to be very taxing. Though students (of both the colleges) express their awareness of great benefits derived from the internal assessment programme, their response to the way this works is rather negative. In their overall assessment on the way the internal evaluation works, 47 per cent of Loyola and 55 per cent of St. Joseph's students agree that it works out well, while 49 per cent of Loyola and 43 per cent of St. Joseph's students say that it doesn't. In their comments and suggestions they point out how irregularly and badly internal evaluation is administered by some teachers. It is rather surprising that they point out honestly how students themselves take an undue advantage of internal evaluation, especially by copying assignments and even tests in the class-rooms (which seems to be tolerated by teachers though not willingly allowing it). And a common complaint by them is that these tests are conducted in a slipshod manner by

some teachers who keep them all for the last weeks of the semester thus undermining the very notion of "continuous" evaluation. The principals, on their part, observe that repeated requests have been made to teachers to plan their evaluation programme in advance, to space them out so as not to over-burden the students at the end of the semester, and to maintain standards and quality of tests. This is a rather serious failure on the part of teachers in conducting internal assessment, or more correctly an improper use of freedom given to them. This can be rectified only with serious and honest efforts of teachers themselves. What is surprising to note is that in spite of all these aberrations in the administration of evaluation, about which complaints come mainly from high achievers, students do seem to repose a great trust in their teachers. It is, then, the teachers' responsibility to have a code of conduct for themselves, as suggested by J. N. Kapur, with a view not to belie this great trust reposed in them by their students.

For total evaluation at the end of each semester course, both the colleges have assigned equal ratios to internal and external evaluations, however with major variations. Thus, Loyola has adopted a system of 50: 50 of internal and external evaluations at the UG (Under graduate) level, and 100 per cent internal at the PG (Post-graduate) level. For the semester examinations, question papers for the UG courses are set by external examiners, but valued by one of the departmental staff and checked by the external examiners. But St. Joseph's has adopted a system of internal and external for both the PG and the UG courses. Both the colleges were hoping to make evaluation completely internal in the course of time. An enquiry from the staff reveals that a majority of them (60 per cent in Loyola and 80 per cent in St. Joseph's) opt for "partly internal and partly external" system of evaluation at the UG and the PG levels, none in Loyola and 3 per cent in St. Joseph's for fully external evaluation, and 39 per cent and 16 per cent for fully internal evaluation in Loyola and St. Joseph's respectively.

The principal of Loyola has second thoughts over having completely internalized evaluation at the PG level, as it has been brought to his notice that some teachers taking PG courses fail in their duty to keep the standards prescribed, both in teaching and evaluating. As we have already observed above, it is the intellectual honesty of teachers which can uphold and

maintain the standards of education, and if this is woefully lacking, it would only confirm the fears expressed by teachers against teachers in an autonomous set-up. Proper measures should be evolved by the administration, better perhaps by teachers themselves, to check any tendency among teachers to water down the standards of teaching and evaluation. Both the colleges are faced with the touchy problem of remuneration demanded by teachers for the invigilations and/or correction of semester examination papers. The Governing Bodies of these two colleges have decided upon giving remuneration for invigilation and evaluation at the university rates.

Conclusion

These are some of the experiences of these two colleges through the first two years of implementation of the programme. Both the colleges are aware that still more needs to be planned and implemented, ideals need to be clarified, ways to be rectified, means to be elucidated, difficulties and constraints to be boldly met with, in their endeavours to effect a face-lift to our educational system. They are also aware that for a successful implementation of the programme, cooperation of staff, students and managements is absolutely essential: on the part of teachers, cooperation in terms of intellectual and moral honesty, intellectual pursuits and willingness to put in harder work; on the part of students, search for excellence, readiness to be trained and moulded, susceptibility to sound learning ensuing from serious and disciplined work; and on the part of managements, allowing flexibility of structures, pliability to challenges of the times, adaptability of administrative structures to the calls of dire societal needs. To achieve these, there is a long way to go. Neither success nor failure of this programme is to be gauged from what has been implemented so far. Success or failure is to be measured from what the "product" or "output" of this programme will contribute to Indian society once they will be out of the campus. All efforts at implementing this new programme are to be directed towards this end. The encouraging initial steps these colleges have taken, in spite of uncertainty threatening them cannot but assure a promise of a better future in the field of higher education in India,

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